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SUNDAY AND THE SABBATH

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THE GOLDEN LECTURES
FOR 1900–1901

BY
H. R. GAMBLE, M.A.
VICAR OF S. BOTOLPH'S, ALDERSGATE STREET, E.C.

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PREFACE

THE form of these lectures was determined by the conditions under which they were delivered. They were preached in a City church, during the luncheon hour, to men in a hurry. The certainty that the congregations would vary from week to week almost necessitated a good deal of repetition; and though, in preparing these lectures for the press, it would have been possible to remedy, or at least modify, this defect, it was thought best, for many reasons, to leave them almost exactly as they were originally delivered. The sole aim of the author has been to set forth, as clearly and concisely as possible, what he believes to be the only theory of Sunday that is consistent with history and fact.

CONTENTS

LECTURE I.

PAGE

THE ORIGIN OF THE JEWISH SABBATH . . . 1

LECTURE II.

NATURE AND BASIS OF THE JEWISH SABBATH . 29

LECTURE III.

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY . . 53

LECTURE IV.

SUNDAY IN THE EARLY CHURCH . . . 71

LECTURE V.

SUNDAY: (*a*) IN THE MIDDLE AGES . . . 89

(*b*) AT THE REFORMATION . . . 99

LECTURE VI.

SUNDAY AT THE PRESENT DAY . . . 115

LECTURE I

THE ORIGIN OF THE JEWISH SABBATH

GOLDEN LECTURES

LECTURE I

"*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's.*"—COL. ii. 16, R.V.

THERE can be little doubt that what is sometimes called "the Sunday question" is one which at the present time excites a considerable amount of interest and attention. The last few years have witnessed a very remarkable change in the popular methods of Sunday observance—a remarkable change, I mean, as compared with the half-century which preceded them. There has been a reaction, almost indeed a revolt, against the view of Sunday which commonly prevailed during the greater part of the last century in the nation as a whole. The friends of the old order com-

plain that the day has been "secularised." They note that the custom of attending public worship, regularly and as a matter of course, seems to be on the decline, and that amusements and recreations of various kinds—golf, boating, bicycling, travelling, the excursion train and the excursion boat—abound and increase.

And there can be no doubt that these "signs of the times" cause genuine distress to a large number of religiously-minded persons. They lament and they condemn; and it is only when challenged to declare explicitly their grounds for lament and condemnation, that they, as a general rule, begin to find themselves in a difficulty. They know, from practical experience, the value of Sunday, as they have been accustomed to spend it—with "the voice of praise and thanksgiving among such as keep holy-day"; but when they proceed to explain the grounds on which, as they conceive, Sunday ought to be observed, they usually take up a position which they find extremely hard to defend against the logic of their opponents. Their

instincts are generally right, but their reasons are almost invariably wrong. For it is probable that nine out of ten religious persons ground their observance of Sunday upon the fourth commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

"There," they will say, "that is the commandment which we believe to be of universal and eternal obligation."

It is here that they expose themselves to the shafts of their opponents, who proceed remorselessly to demolish their position. They point out:—

1. That the Sabbath day of the com-

mandment was the day which we call Saturday—the seventh and not the first day of the week—and they proceed to ask why they have taken upon themselves to change it. This is the first difficulty. If it be replied that the Sabbath was changed from the "seventh day of the week to the first," it is asked, not unreasonably, when this change was made and by whom. Probably our Sabbatarian friends (if we may call them so for convenience' sake) have a cloudy notion that there is something in the New Testament authorising or commanding the change; but on examining their Bibles carefully, they have to confess that they cannot find any passage supporting their belief; that, in fact, there *is* nothing in the New Testament supporting it; and that they have been, it seems, all their life assenting to an alteration of a commandment which they declared to be of universal and eternal obligation.

2. But another difficulty follows: supposing Sunday to be (what there is no authority for calling it) "the Sabbath," altered from

the seventh to the first day of the week, is it even then observed after the manner indicated in the fourth commandment? "Thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates." Here our friend seems for a moment to be on stronger ground. "I never," he says, "work on Sundays. No, nor do I permit any work which is not absolutely necessary." But the commandment makes no distinction between work "necessary" and "unnecessary": and who is to define what is necessary? Is the work of the postman necessary? or of the omnibus driver? or of the policeman? are we to make distinctions just at our own will? Is a man to rest, and his son and his daughter and his manservant and his cattle—but not his maidservant? On what grounds am I to assert that the lighting of a fire, distinctly forbidden under the Mosaic Law (Exod. xxxv. 3), is necessary, or the making of a cup of tea? Are not these my own arbitrary glosses on the letter of the

commandment? There is no end to the minute, and frequently absurd, distinctions which can be made. One writer, for instance, declares that, when Sunday travelling for the clergy is necessary, "private carriages, and not public conveyances, should in all such cases be used,"—a principle which, apart from the fact that most clergymen have not got private carriages, would simply mean another and most unnecessary extension of Sunday labour.

3. But even this is not all. "Suppose," our objector may say—"suppose I concede you these two points—that Sunday is a Sabbath transferred to another day by some (unknown) authority, and that I may be said to do no manner of work, if I only do, or allow to be done, certain kinds according to my own discretion, still there is nothing to show that the day was commanded or intended to be spent, wholly or in part, in the public worship on which Christians insist. Indeed, there is not a word about 'worshipping' in the whole commandment. It is said, indeed, that the day is to be kept holy, but

evidently the method of so observing it is defined in the words 'thou shalt do no manner of work.' Literally, therefore, I keep the command if I do nothing at all."

It must be owned that all these are very formidable objections to anything like a literal observance of the fourth commandment; and if our Sabbatarian friend, giving up the question of literal observance, insists that, at any rate, there is the "underlying principle" of the commandment, viz. that *one* day in seven should in some way be kept holy to the Lord, I am afraid that one must answer that if the rest of the commandment is no longer literally binding on Christians, it is not easy to see how this portion can be retained.*

I do not think that, in putting the matter as I have put it, I am doing so in an unfair or exaggerated manner. It appears to me that there are a large number of persons in

* "For by what right do we say that the order of the day, whether it be the first or the seventh, is a matter of indifference, because only formal, but that the proportion of days, one in seven instead of one in eight or nine, is moral and unalterable?" (F. W. ROBERTSON, *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 89.)

a nebulous condition of mind as to the true meaning and obligation of Sunday. It will therefore be my object, in these lectures, to present what I believe to be the true Christian view of the day which we call Sunday, and to show—

(1)*That the Jewish Sabbath is utterly abolished; that it has no binding force upon Christians;

(2) That there is no connexion between the Sabbath and the Lord's Day (commonly called Sunday); and

(3) That the Lord's Day stands upon a basis of its own, which is quite firm enough to support it without the help of any "Sabbatarianism"; that it has the strongest claim upon the hearts and consciences of Christians as a day of special worship, and, as a great social institution, even of many who do not "profess and call themselves Christians."

* This order, though expressing the general tendency of the lectures, is not formally preserved.

Let us turn then, once more, to those words of S. Paul which I have chosen for a text: "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's."

These words are, surely, quite clear. Although the Church of Colossæ was mainly Gentile, it also contained a strong Jewish element, and had fallen under the influence of those "Judaising" teachers who still regarded the Jewish Law as binding. Against these teachers S. Paul vigorously inveighs. He speaks of the whole law as a bond cancelled by the blood of Christ, "the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us; and He hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross," and so he warns them not to submit to any tyranny of this kind. No man was to judge them "in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day." You notice that all alike stand on the same level. He does

not say, "Distinctions of meats and drinks are now abolished, and you need not observe festivals like the new moon; but the Sabbath is of perpetual obligation." All are set on the same footing; all alike have "had their day and ceased to be." They vanish before the substance, the reality, Christ Himself. "We may observe that if the ordinance of the Sabbath had been, *in any form*, of lasting obligation on the Christian Church, it would have been quite impossible for the Apostle to have spoken thus. The fact of an obligatory rest of one day, whether the seventh or the first, would have been directly in the teeth of his assertion here; the holding of such would have been still to retain the shadow, while we possess the substance."*

S. Paul, then, it is clear, regards the Sabbath simply as part of the Jewish Law. The Law has passed away; therefore the Sabbath has passed away also. No one is to be judged in respect of it. Such is the teaching of the Apostle; and it suggests

* Dean ALFORD, *On the Colossians.* See Note A.

the questions: (1) How far does this teaching agree with modern Sabbatarian doctrine? and (2) Why does S. Paul insist so vehemently on the fact that the Sabbath has no claim upon Christian people?

(1) It must surely be confessed that the difference between S. Paul and the Sabbatarian is sufficiently striking. With the latter there is no more favourite doctrine than that the Sabbath was an ordinance instituted by God at the creation of the world, and therefore presumably intended for all nations and for all time. The arguments used to support this theory are mainly the language of the fourth commandment, as recorded in Exodus xx., and the words in Genesis ii. 3: "And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it: because that in it He rested from all His work that God had created and made." It is also added that the weekly division of time is itself only to be explained by an original commandment appointing and sanctifying a seventh-day rest.

None of these arguments appear to possess great weight. With regard to Genesis ii. 3, it is to be observed that this particular verse belongs to what most modern scholars regard as a portion of the Hexateuch, which is considerably later than, *e.g.*, the passage describing the giving of the Decalogue—viz. the so-called "Priests' Code"; and that the expression "God rested on the seventh day" appears to represent a later conception of God, perhaps itself suggested by and intended to account for the institution of the Sabbath. Certainly, if we take the earlier portions of the Old Testament, we shall find in the traditions of the patriarchs —the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—no trace of a Sabbath being observed, nor is it ever treated by the later prophets as a part of the universal law binding on the heathen, who are rebuked for many things, but never for Sabbath-breaking. Nor does it seem possible to attach any importance to the contention that the weekly division of time implies or demands a "primitive Sabbath" as its explanation. For, as a fact,

it is not difficult to see other reasons for such a division, simply arising from the observation of Nature. "The four quarters of the moon supply an obvious division of the month; and wherever new moon and full moon are religious occasions, we get in the most natural way a sacred cycle of fourteen or fifteen days, of which the week of seven or eight days (determined by the half moon) is the half."* Such and similar reasons suggest themselves† without our resorting to the hypothesis of a "primitive Sabbath," and it may be noticed that though the week is an old division of time, common to all the Semites, it was by no means universal.

We come, then, to the argument which rests upon the language of the fourth commandment, and the reason there assigned for the observation of the Sabbath. But here we at once encounter a considerable difficulty, viz. the striking and important difference between the two versions of the fourth commandment, appearing, the one

* W. R. SMITH, *Encycl. Brit.* † See Note B.

in Exodus, the other in Deuteronomy. Let us compare them. Here, then, is the commandment as it appears in Exodus xx. :—

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it."

Now take the fourth commandment as it appears in Deuteronomy v. :—

"Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord thy God commanded thee. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any

of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

Here, as you will notice, in one version the Sabbath is based upon the commemoration of God "resting" after the creation of the world. In the other version, *no allusion whatever* is made to the Creation; and the Sabbath is said to commemorate the deliverance of the people from the Egyptian tyranny: "the Lord thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: *therefore* the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day."

How are we to account for this remarkable difference? It is evidently impossible that *both* these versions can be the original form of the commandment; the question is,

Was either? And, if either, whence came such a remarkable departure, in the other version of the commandment, from the original? Can we suppose that anyone would have deliberately omitted a portion of a commandment regarded as divine, and substituted another reason for the "rest" of the seventh day? Or, are we not rather driven to some such hypothesis as the following? In its original form as given by Moses, the commandment must have been very short, perhaps only the bare statement, "Remember (or observe) the Sabbath day." At a later date the commandment was expanded. The author of Deuteronomy saw in the Sabbath rest a commemoration of the rest of the people after the labours of Egypt —a perpetual memorial of their deliverance by the hand of God. The explanation in Exodus xx., connecting it with the Creation, is probably of later date, and may have been based upon Exodus xxxi. 17: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed"; and on Genesis ii. 2: "And

He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made"—both of which passages are assigned by modern scholars to the late "Priests' Code."

Such appears to be the most probable explanation of the marked discrepancy between the two versions of the fourth commandment as given in Exodus and Deuteronomy, a discrepancy which evidently demands *some* explanation; and if it be not free from difficulties, it certainly appears to be far more satisfactory than any others which have been proposed.*

Let us, then, note that the attempt to base, on the words of Scripture, the hypothesis of a primitive Sabbath, of universal and perpetual obligation, will not bear a close examination. To what, then, was the Sabbath of the Hebrews due? Our answer is that it was directly due to the legislation of Moses. It is in connexion with Moses that the Sabbath is first mentioned, and in Exodus xx. its observance is solemnly enjoined upon the people, together with the rest of the Deca-

* See Note C.

logue. The Sabbath is a Mosaic institution. But, in taking this position, it is not intended to deny that some such institution may have been, and probably was, previously known to the Hebrews. It is certain, for instance, that a somewhat similar institution existed at a much earlier period among the Babylonians* and Assyrians, "obviously connected with the seventh-day periods of the moon"† and it would be rash to assert that, because there is no mention of it before the days of Moses, it was therefore unknown, in any form, to his people. In other religious customs, *e.g.* the practice of circumcision, we find, of course, analogies between the religion of the Hebrews and that of other Semitic peoples. In this case, then, also, we may, perhaps, think of Moses rather as purifying and "re-editing" an institution already existing, associating it with the service of Jehovah, and making it an instrument in the education of his people. But in either case it is simply a part of the Mosaic dispensation, and is therefore

* See Note D. † SAYCE.

set by S. Paul on the same level as the distinctions of meats and drinks, the "new moons," with which Sabbaths are often associated,* and the other feasts which, whatever may have been their origin, were incorporated in the Jewish Law.

(2) So much, then, for the differences between S. Paul and modern Sabbatarianism. When we come to the second question, Why has S. Paul insisted so vehemently on the fact that the Sabbath has no claim on Christians? we find ourselves set to answer a large question—too large, indeed, for our present lecture. To understand it we must see what was the nature and basis of the Jewish Sabbath, and indeed of the other distinctions of "holy days," "holy places," "clean" and "unclean meats," which were the keynote of Judaism. With that question we must endeavour to deal in our next lecture.

NOTE A.

See also Dean Alford on Romans xiv. 5:—

"It is an interesting question, what indication

* See 2 Kings iv. 23; Hosea ii. 11; Isaiah i. 13.

is here found of the observance or non-observance of a day of obligation in the apostolic times. The apostle *decides nothing;* leaving every man's own mind to guide him in the point. He classes the observance or non-observance of particular days with the eating or abstaining from particular meats. In both cases he is concerned with things which he evidently treats as of *absolute indifference in themselves.* Now the question is, Supposing the divine obligation of one day in seven to have been recognised by him *in any form*, could he have thus spoken? The obvious inference from his strain of arguing is that he *knew of no such obligation. . . . I therefore infer that the sabbatical obligation to keep any day, whether seventh or first, was not recognised in apostolic times.* It must be carefully remembered that this inference does not concern the question of the observance of *the Lord's Day* as *an institution of the Christian Church*," etc. etc.

NOTE B.

Compare Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, p. 244:—

"The division of the month into four equal parts or weeks can have originated, independently of the seven planets; it can have been in use without one of the days of the week being dedicated to each of those seven planets. So can the appearance of the New Moon have given occasion

for a religious feast, and yet the moon goddess may not have been the particular object of adoration at that Feast. But still all this is not exactly probable. The sacredness of the number seven points to a general prevalence of planet-worship; and this once acknowledged, it is, at least, very natural also to connect with it the week of seven days." See also parts of Note D.

NOTE C.

Different Versions of the Fourth Commandment in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

In *Lex Mosaica*, p. 57, Dr. Douglas writes thus of Deuteronomy: "The style and handling of the topics is rhetorical; the dying Moses wishes to impress his people, whom he addressed thus lovingly. The whole language is that of the orator. Even in the fourth commandment a new and tender motive is introduced."

Apart from the question whether a "dying" man would naturally adopt a "rhetorical style," one may well remind a professed literalist that the version of the Commandments given in Deuteronomy v. is introduced by the words, "The Lord spake with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire . . . saying," etc. Thus the words ascribed to "the Lord" are by Dr. Douglas treated as a private invention of

Moses, "a new and tender motive introduced" by him; surely an amazing position for such a doughty champion of literalism. Everyone must judge for himself whether this explanation or that of Dr. Driver (see his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*) is the more probable. Those who accept that of Dr. Douglas must face the fact that in this case Moses deliberately omitted a portion of a commandment spoken by "the voice of God" and written by "His finger."

NOTE D.

"One of the most interesting facts that result from this Hemerology is that the Sabbath was known to the Babylonians and Assyrians. Its institution must have gone back to the Accadian epoch, since the term used to represent it in the text is the Accadian *udu khulgal*, "an unlawful day," like the Latin "dies nefastus," which is rendered by *sulum*, or rest-day, in Assyrian. Semitic Babylonian, however, possessed the term Sabbath as well, and a vocabulary explains it as being "a day of rest for the heart." Like the Hebrew Sabbath it was observed every seventh day, and was obviously connected with the seventh-day periods of the moon.

"But there are two aspects in which it differed from the Hebrew institution. Among the Israelites 'the Sabbath' and the 'new moons' were separate

from one another; among the Babylonians they coincided, in so far as the Sabbath fell on the first day of the lunar month. Consequently, since the month consisted of thirty days, the last week contained nine days. In the second place, the 19th of the intercalary Elul was also a Sabbath. Why it should have been I cannot pretend to say" (A. H. Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1887).

See also the same writer's *Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, pp. 74–8 :—

"On the other hand, the narrative of Genesis concludes with a statement which carries us back to Babylonia, though it is probable that it is a statement which was not found in the Assyrian Epic. We are told that God 'rested on the seventh day from all His work He made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made.' The Sabbath-rest was a Babylonian, as well as a Hebrew, institution. Its origin went back to pre-Semitic days, and the very name, Sabbath, by which it was known in Hebrew, was of Babylonian origin. In the cuneiform tablets the Sabattu is described as a 'day of rest for the soul,' and in spite of the fact that the word was of genuinely Semitic origin, it was derived by the Assyrian scribes from two Sumerian or pre-Semitic words, *sa* and *bat*, which meant respectively 'heart' and 'ceasing.'

The Sabbath was also known, at all events in Accadian times, as a 'dies nefastus,' a day on which certain work was forbidden to be done, and an old list of Babylonian festivals and fast-days tells us that on the seventh, fourteenth, nineteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth days of each month the Sabbath-rest had to be observed. . . .

"Now, as Prof. Schreder has pointed out, the sacredness of the seventh day among the Babylonians hangs together with their respect for the number seven. Seven, in fact, was their sacred number, connected originally, it may be, with the seven planets which their astronomers had noted from the earliest times. We first find notice of the week of seven days among them. Each day of the week was consecrated to one of the seven planets or planetary divinities, and it is from the Babylonians, through the medium of the Greeks and Romans, that our own week, with its days dedicated to Teutonic deities, is ultimately derived. . . .

"We must therefore admit that we first find traces of the week of seven days, with the rest-day or Sabbath which fell on the seventh, in Babylonia, and that it was intimately connected with the astronomical belief in the existence of seven planets. But between the Babylonian and the Hebrew conception there are certain differences which must not be overlooked. In the first

place, the Hebrew Sabbath is entirely divorced from all connection with Babylonian astronomy and the polytheistic worship with which it was bound up. The week remains with its seventh-day rest, but its days are no longer distinguished from one another by their consecration to the planets and the planetary deities. It is a mere space of time and nothing more. The Sabbath, moreover, ceases to be independent of the changes of the moon. The festival of the New Moon and the weekly Sabbath are separated from one another; instead of a Sabbath which occurred on each seventh day of the lunar month, with a still unexplained Sabbath on the nineteenth, the Old Testament recognises only a Sabbath which recurs at regular intervals of seven days, irrespective of the beginning and end of the month. The institution of the Sabbath is divested of its heathen associations and transformed into a means of binding together more closely the chosen people, and keeping them apart from the rest of mankind. In place of the astronomical reasons which preside over the institution of the Babylonian Sabbath, two reasons are given for its observance in Israel—one that on the seventh day God had rested from His work of creation, the other that Israel had been 'a servant in the land of Egypt,' and had been brought out 'hence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm.' How far the strictness of the observance may have

increased in the course of centuries, or how far the ideas of the Jews in regard to it may have differed before and after the Exile, is not for the archæologist to say. It is true that there is little or no reference to it in the Books of Samuel and Kings: but so also in the historical inscriptions of Assyria is there no reference to the Babylonian Sabbath.

"The relation between the Sabbath of the Babylonians and the Sabbath of the Old Testament is parallel to the relation between the Assyrian Epic of the Creation and the first chapter of Genesis. The Biblical writer, it is plain, is acquainted, either directly or indirectly, with the Assyrian and Babylonian tradition. With him it is stripped of all that was distinctively Babylonian and polytheistic, and is become in his hands a sober narrative, breathing a spirit of the purest and most exalted monotheism. In passing from the Assyrian poem to the Biblical narrative we seem to pass from romance to reality. But this ought not to blind us to the fact that the narrative is ultimately of Babylonian origin."

LECTURE II

NATURE AND BASIS OF THE JEWISH SABBATH

LECTURE II

"*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: . . . God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*"—S. JOHN iv. 23, 24.

WE considered in our last lecture that the Jewish Sabbath was, for Christians, like the rest of the Mosaic Law, utterly abolished. But this raises the question, Why was it abolished? And to answer that question we must examine more closely the nature and meaning of the institution. "Remember," says the fourth commandment, "the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." What is meant here by the term "holy" as applied in the Old Testament to days, things, places, men? Let me answer in the words of a modern scholar:—

"There is a certain probability that the primary idea is that of 'separation,' or 'cutting off.' . . . At all events, it is correct

to say that a 'holy' object is one separated from common use and contact by supernatural sanctions. . . . It only needs to be remarked that in hardly any case does the separation denoted (by the ordinary Hebrew word for 'holy') . . . amount to absolute removal from human use or contact. All that is usually involved is that the use of the 'holy' is *restricted* by ceremonial rules, or confined to privileged persons, or to particular times. . . . The holiness of places, things, seasons, even of persons, is thus safeguarded by a set of recognised religious usages, which sometimes, as in the Levitical ritual of the Old Testament, attain a high degree of complexity."*

Or, again, we may quote some words from F. W. Robertson,† which somewhat anticipate some of my later remarks :—

"There is a difference between the spirit of Judaism and that of Christianity. The spirit of Judaism is separation—that of Christianity is permeation. To separate the

* J. SKINNER, *Dictionary of the Bible.*

† *Sermons*, Series I. p. 82.

evil from the good was the aim and work of Judaism; to sever one nation from all other nations; certain meats from other meats; certain days from other days. To sanctify means to set apart. The very essence of the idea of heaven and holiness lay in sanctification, in the sense of separation. On the contrary, Christianity is permeation—it permeates evil with good; it aims at overcoming evil by good; it desires to transfer the spirit of the day of rest into all other days, and to spread the holiness of one nation over all the world. To saturate life with God, and the world with heaven; this is the genius of Christianity."

And it may be noticed that this conception of "holiness" is by no means peculiar to the Israelites. It is shared by all the Semitic peoples. "The distinction between what is *holy* and what is *common* is one of the most important things in ancient religion, but also one which is very difficult to grasp precisely, because its interpretation varied from age to age with the general progress of religious thought. To us holiness is an ethical idea.

God, the perfect being, is the type of holiness; men are holy in proportion as their lives and characters are God-like; places and things can be called holy only by a figure, on account of their association with spiritual things. This conception of holiness goes back to the Hebrew prophets, especially to Isaiah; but it is not the ordinary conception of antique religion, nor does it correspond to the original sense of the Semitic word which we translate 'holy.' While it is not easy to fix the exact idea of holiness in ancient Semitic religion, it is quite certain that it has nothing to do with morality and purity of life."*

Holiness is, in fact, a ritual rather than an ethical term, and if we remember this truth it will certainly help us to understand more clearly the meaning of the Mosaic Law. We shall regard it as a necessary stage in God's education of the world. The religion of Israel did not appear full grown. It was gradually developed from lower forms. In its earlier stages it had much

* ROBERTSON SMITH, *Religion of Semites*, p. 132.

in common with other religions of the ancient world. It shared many characteristic notions and beliefs. It passed, like that of other nations, through its childhood of weakness and superstition, and if it reached a stronger and nobler manhood than the rest it was surely on the principle that he who is "faithful over a few things" shall be "ruler over many things."

And we need not be surprised to find that the life of the Hebrews, as of children, had to be hedged round with laws of "holiness." "Touch not, taste not, handle not." To serve God "in spirit and in truth" was not yet possible for them; they could only begin, as they did begin, by regarding Him as separate from themselves, and by recognising the duty of separating and surrendering to Him certain portions of their time, their places, their possessions. It was not, as we have said, until a later stage of development, when ethical conceptions of God had become higher and clearer, that the term "holy," as being connected with Him,

began itself to acquire an ethical significance. To bring out and emphasise the moral perfection of God was the special work of the prophets. "To the prophet, Jehovah was essentially a moral being 'of too pure eyes to behold evil,' and swift to resent and punish the iniquity of His people. And since holiness embraced every distinctive attribute of Godhead, it was to be expected that, in the light of this ethical conception of God, the word should take on the sense of moral perfectness, at least on its negative side of opposition to human sin."

This, however, was a later stage. In the earlier stages "holiness" is equivalent to separation. We have* "clean" and "unclean" meats, and "holy" places, "holy" persons, "holy" days, separated from other places, persons, days. Of these holy days the Sabbath was perhaps the most ancient; and it was marked off from other days by one great distinction, "in it thou shalt do no manner of work." This was to be the

* See Note A.

sign, the note of its separation, its holiness. Nor is there, I think, any reason to believe that in earlier times it was associated with any special sacrifice or worship.* This is, indeed, a matter on which it is difficult to speak with certainty, as in the earlier historical books of the Old Testament the Sabbath is not mentioned at all, and had we those books only we might have imagined it to be non-existent, while there are only one or two allusions to it in the Books of the Kings.† It is manifest, however, that as time went on it was more and more fenced by the protection of strict laws; thus in Exodus xxxi. 15 we read, "Whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death," and in Numbers xv. 35 we have the incident of the man who was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. So,

* See Note B.

† See 2 Kings iv. 23, an obscure passage, which *may* imply that "the prophets were in the habit of gathering the people around them, and perhaps of granting inquirers and suppliants an audience at new moons and on Sabbaths." (*Dic. of Bible*, vol. i. p. 859.)

too, in the later portions of the Law, we have elaborate directions for special sacrifices, etc., on that day.

It is also quite clear that, whatever may have been the manner of observing the Sabbath before the Babylonian Captivity, after that event, not only was it kept with great care, but it also became more what we should call a day of "worship." It was, indeed, only natural that the Sabbath should have become an object of special reverence, when it is considered that, during the exile, with no temple and no facilities for carrying out large portions of the Law, the Sabbath was almost the only part of the ceremonial Law, except Circumcision, which could be observed, and it naturally became the proud badge of Jewish exclusiveness. In the reforms of Nehemiah it occupies a prominent place, and many are his denunciations of Sabbath-breaking. So also we find a custom growing up of attending "synagogue" for instruction in the Law on the Sabbath day. We must remember that "synagogues" originated during, or in consequence of, the

Babylonish Captivity. The Old Testament contains no allusions to their existence. "We can readily understand how, during the long years of exile in Babylon, places and opportunities for common worship on Sabbaths and feast days must have been felt almost as a necessity. This would furnish, at least, the basis for the institution of the synagogue. After the return to Palestine . . . such 'meeting-houses' would become absolutely requisite. Here those who were ignorant even of the language of the Old Testament would hear the Scriptures read and 'targumed' to them. It was but natural that prayers, and, in course of time, addresses should be added. Thus the regular synagogue services would gradually arrive; first on Sabbaths and on feast or fast days, then on ordinary days, at the same hours as, and with a sort of internal correspondence to the services of the Temple."*

Here, then, we have the beginning of a truly "spiritual" use of the Sabbath day; but it must be remembered that this method

* EDERSHEIM, *Life and Times, etc.*, vol. i. p. 432.

of observing the day was not associated with it in its original institution, and, strangely enough, side by side with a spiritual observance of the Sabbath, after the Captivity, we have a gradual elaboration of those petty rules and ceremonies which moved the contempt of Christ. So fanatical, indeed, did the Jews become, that at the beginning of the Maccabæan War one thousand of them preferred being slain to making any defence on the Sabbath; while the minute and ridiculous hair-splitting about what constituted "a burden," etc., sounds to modern ears hardly credible.* Still, even under Pharisaic rule, the Sabbath largely remained a day of joy, as it had always been† (*vide* Hosea ii. 11: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her Sabbaths"). Social entertainments were common, the feasts were abundant, though hot dishes were forbidden, and wine was drunk. Our Lord was asked to "eat bread" in a Pharisee's house "on the Sabbath day." And so, although guarded by minute rules, the Sabbath day was by no

* See Note C. † See Note D.

means distinguished by the Puritanical gloom with which it is sometimes associated.

This brief and imperfect sketch of the history of the Sabbath seemed to be necessary, if the nature of the day were to be understood. We find it in two marks: (1) it was separated from other days, as being intrinsically different from them, and (2) its observance was determined by strict, though not necessarily harsh, rules. When we ask, What was the attitude of Christ towards it? the answer is, that His attitude towards the Sabbath was just the same as His attitude towards all the Jewish Law. He was born under it, He did not despise it. He became obedient to the Law in His earthly life. He was circumcised, and "presented in the Temple." He went up to Jerusalem. He "fulfilled all righteousness." He kept the Sabbath, though in keeping it He refused to be bound by Pharisaic traditions, and declared it to be made for Man, not Man for the Sabbath. But none the less He prepared the way for another dispensation, in which the Sabbath could hold no place.

He came to set men free from the bondage of the Law, and to bring them the liberty of sons. He came to substitute a free spiritual obedience for conformity to external commands. He came to make all life holy. He declared that all the commandments could be summed up in love of God and Man; that mercy was better than sacrifice; that the hour was coming when the true worshippers should worship the Father "in spirit and in truth"; that true and spiritual service was alone acceptable to Him.

See for a moment how the teaching of Christ and His Apostles bears upon the old notion of "holiness" as conceived by the Jews. See our Lord with the woman of Samaria. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Here is the expression of the old conception: that shrine, and that alone, is the place "where men ought to worship"; and the answer cuts away that conception once and for ever. It is no longer "here" or "there," but within men, that the true Kingdom of God lies.

The hour cometh when "neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father." Old things are passed away, behold! they are made new—the spirit of Man is the true Jerusalem, for "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

And as with "holy" places, so also with the distinction between "clean" and "unclean" meats. Note this incident:* "And He called to Him the multitude again, and said unto them, Hear Me all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man. And when He was entered into the house from the multitude, His disciples asked of Him the parable. And He saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into a man, it cannot defile him; because it goeth not into his heart, but into his belly, and goeth out

* S. Mark vii. 14.

into the draught? *This He said*, making all meats clean." Such is the comment of the evangelist. He perceives that the principle laid down by Christ abolishes at one stroke the distinction between clean and unclean; "this He said, cleansing all meats.'

And the principle applied by our Lord to places and meats is applied by S. Paul to *days*. To him the difference between Judaism and Christianity is the difference between the letter and the spirit, between Law and Grace; he would have men serve God, not tied by rules, not by law from which Christ had liberated them, but with the free obedience of sons.* So he views with suspicion all attempts to make God's service one of stated times and seasons. "Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you."† So he writes to the Galatians: the Sabbath being among the days. Or again, writing to the Romans, he pleads for making the observance of particular days a matter of indifference. "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day

* See Note E. † Gal. iv. 10.

alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind";* or, once more, in the words addressed to the Colossians, he places new moons and Sabbaths among the shadows which had passed away.

It is hardly necessary to add that the "holiness" of persons, in the Jewish sense, like that of days, places, and things, also represents a conception now become obsolete. The Incarnation was the taking of all humanity into God. The distinction between Jew and Gentile was abolished. "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common."

The line of argument which I have been pursuing is, of course, a very familiar one. I have only been dwelling upon it because there are still many who, perceiving and acknowledging as a general truth that the Mosaic Law only represents a stage in God's education of the world, and is no longer binding upon Christians, try to make one exception—in favour of the Sabbath. But there is, in truth, no difference between

* Rom. xiv. 5.

the Sabbath and the rest; and the fiction of a "Creation-Sabbath," of universal obligation, which is supposed to be distinct from the Jewish Sabbath and to have survived it, is one which will not bear examination. To the Apostles, to the early Christians, such an exception in favour of the Sabbath never occurred. It is true that, as was only natural, the relation of Christianity to the Law was not at once clearly perceived by all. It is true that there was, and rightly, a tender consideration for the difficulties and prejudices of Jewish Christians. Of this tenderness we have an instance in the letter from Jerusalem (Acts xv.), which desired the Gentile Christians, for the sake of their Jewish brethren, to abstain "from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood"; but even here there is no mention of the Sabbath, or any hint that its observance was expected or required. No. It had passed away, and those who, like S. Paul, rejoiced in the liberty of sons, could not but cry out, "With freedom did Christ set us free; stand

fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."* And as all the earth was the Lord's and the fulness of it, so all the days were the Lord's and the fulness of them.

All the days are the Lord's. What, then, it will be asked, is the "Lord's Day"? Special days and months and seasons are no more binding. What, then, are the days and seasons, the feasts and fasts, of the Christian Church to-day? It is to the first of these questions (and so, by implication, to the second) that I shall address myself in the next lecture. Only now let us be sure that, whatever may still be the practical needs of human nature, the Christian ideal must always lie enshrined in the deathless words of her Master, which warned the woman of Samaria that the old order was changing and giving place to new; that the true worshippers were not those who "kept the Sabbath," but they who worshipped "in spirit and in truth."

* Gal. v. 1.

NOTE A.

On "holiness, uncleanness and taboo," see Robertson Smith, *Religion of Semites*, Note C., p. 427.

Originally, as he shows, "holy" is allied not to "clean," but to "unclean," *i.e.* "holy and unclean things have this in common, that in both cases certain restrictions lie on men's use of and contact with them, and that the breach of these restrictions involves supernatural dangers. The difference between the two appears, not in their relation to man's ordinary life, but in their relations to the gods. Holy things are not free to man, because they pertain to the gods; uncleanness is criminal, according to the view taken in the higher Semitic religions, because it is hateful to the God, and therefore not to be tolerated in his sanctuary, his worshippers, and his land." But this is a later conception. "Even in more advanced nations the notion of holiness and uncleanness often touch. Among the Syrians swine's flesh was *taboo*, but it was an open question whether this was because the animal was holy, or because it was unclean" (p. 143).

Lecture IV. and Note C. should be carefully read.

NOTE B.

The Babylonian Sabbath appears to have been distinguished only by its prohibitions. Thus Prof. Sayce writes (*Higher Criticism, etc.*, p. 74): "The king himself, it is stated, 'must not eat flesh that has been cooked over the coals or in the smoke, he must not change the garments of his body, white robes he must not wear, sacrifices he may not offer, in a chariot he may not ride.' Even the prophet or soothsayer on whose reading of the future the movements of armies were dependent was not allowed to practise his art, 'to mutter,' as it is termed, 'in a secret place.' The rest enjoined on the Sabbath was thus as complete as it was among the Jews in the period after the Babylonian Exile."

See also his *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 73–6.

NOTE C.

For examples of the grievous burdens laid by the Rabbis on men's shoulders in the matter of Sabbath observance see Edersheim's *Life and Times of the Messiah*, vol. ii. appendix xvii. p. 777.

"The Mishnic tractate *Sabbath* stands at the head of twelve tractates, which together form the second of the six sections into which the Mishnah is divided, and which treats of Festive

Seasons. Properly to understand the Sabbath regulations it is, however, necessary also to take into account the second tractate in that section, which treats of what are called 'Commixtures' or 'Connexions.' Its object is to make the Sabbath Law more bearable." Then we have an account of how a number of houses in a common court could be converted into one dwelling by depositing some food in the court; and so rules about not carrying burdens from one house to another could be evaded. Or a Sabbath journey of 2,000 paces could be extended by a man on the Friday depositing on the boundary food for two meals, and so making it his "dwelling"; thus being enabled to go on another 2,000 yards. "If a person were in one place and his hand filled with fruit stretched into another, and the Sabbath overtook him in this attitude, he would have to drop the fruit, since if he withdrew his full hand from one locality into another he would be carrying a burden on the Sabbath." And so on.

NOTE D.

Cf. Isaiah lviii. 13, 14: "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day," etc.

Modern Sabbatarians are particularly fond of quoting these verses as a proof that pleasure was

forbidden on the Jewish Sabbath, and that, in consequence, Sunday recreation, opening of picture galleries, etc., are unlawful. The latter deduction resting on a false identification of the Lord's Day with the Sabbath need not now be noticed. The author of Isaiah lviii. 13, 14, if he wrote, as is probable, in the time of the Exile, was no doubt anxious for good reasons to enforce the "Godward aspect" of the Sabbath at a time when it was, as we have pointed out, almost the only religious institution remaining to the people. The circumstances were peculiar and exceptional, and the passage by no means indicates that under ordinary conditions the Sabbath was not a day of social joy.

Dr. Adam Smith thinks that he may have been impressed by the Babylonian fashion of solemnising the seventh day (see his *Isaiah*, vol. ii. p. 422), but was it the *same* day as the Jewish Sabbath?

NOTE E.

Cf. Jowett, *S. Paul's Epistles*, vol. ii. p. 507. "The Gospel of S. Paul was a Spirit, not a Law; it nowhere enjoined the observance of feasts and sacrifices, and new moons, and Sabbaths, but was rather antagonistic to them; it was heedless of externals of any kind, except as matters of expediency and charity. It was a Gospel which knew of no distinction of nations or persons, in which all men had the offer of "Grace, Mercy, and

Peace" from the Lord Jesus Christ, which denounced the oldness of the letter, which contrasted "the tables of stone" with the "fleshy tables of the heart," which figured Christ taking the handwriting of ordinances and nailing them to His cross, which put faith in the place of works, and even prohibited circumcision; such a Gospel was in extreme antagonism to the Law."

LECTURE III

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY

LECTURE III

"*The first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread.*"—ACTS xx. 7.

"GOD is a spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." Such were the words of Christ to which I directed your attention in my last lecture, in which I endeavoured to show the basis of the Jewish Sabbath, and to point out that, like the rest of the Jewish Law, it was rooted in the distant past, and represented a conception of religion which, though necessary as a stage in the education of the world, was bound to pass away before the teaching of our Lord. But though He laid stress upon the inward and spiritual—though He taught men that the essence of true religion lay, not in keeping rules, but in love of God and man—it must not be supposed that He despised or rejected

the outward and visible. He knew what was in man; He knew the weakness of human nature, and in compassion of that weakness He made provision, while He was yet on earth, for a visible society in which men, not as isolated and solitary searchers after God, but in one "communion and fellowship," should worship the Father and realise their own brotherhood.

Of this visible society Baptism was to be the gate. "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost"; and the service of Holy Communion which He instituted on the night that He was betrayed was to be for His people the inspiring memorial of His own Death and Sacrifice, the symbol of unity, and the perpetual sign, pledge, and instrument of fellowship both with God and with one another.

We receive, then, the visible Church as the gift of Christ—His provision for the needs of human nature—a means to an end, namely, the attainment of a true

spiritual and social religion; a religion not of law, but of love. Before Christ's conception of religion as a spiritual service it is clear, as we have said, that old distinctions of holy places, days, etc., must fall away and disappear. To serve God in spirit and in truth must mean to serve Him always and everywhere: not in some places, or on some days. If special places and special days remain, they could only remain, not as claiming any inherent sanctity in themselves, but merely as helping to one great end—the true ideal—the making of all days and places holy—the "saturating of life with God and earth with heaven."

But was it necessary, for this end, that there should be any holy days at all, even in this changed conception of their meaning? At first, apparently, the necessity was not felt. We have in the Acts of the Apostles a glowing picture of the early Church in Jerusalem. "They then that received his word were baptized; and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls. And they continued

stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers. . . . And day by day, continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

Here we have no hint of any special days. "Day by day" they continue in the Temple and break bread—the breaking of the bread here, no doubt, including, not only the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, but also the common feast, the Agape, with which it was intimately associated. "Day by day." As a great tide rising sometimes submerges and obliterates little hedges and boundaries which separate field from field, so the spirit of God, in full flood descending, swept away all lesser distinctions of times and seasons, filling all life with Himself, making every day a Lord's day; we might almost say, every meal a Lord's Supper, "saturating life with God and earth with heaven."

But, no doubt, this heavenly state was of brief duration, even in Jerusalem, and the conditions prevalent for a while in Jerusalem could hardly be repeated. The gospel spread to other lands. The gospel net inclosed a great multitude of fishes, "bad and good"—and even if the fervour of spirit which glowed in the hearts of the first believers in Jerusalem had animated all believers everywhere, the different conditions of life might have rendered these daily assemblies impossible. And, as time goes on, we begin to perceive that one day in the week—not the seventh, but the first—is spoken of in a significant manner, in a manner which awakens our interest and curiosity. There are three passages in the New Testament which specially deserve our attention.

The first is in Acts xx. 7: "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight.... And there sat in the window a

certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being borne down by his sleep, he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him. And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so he departed."

Here, it will be noticed that the expression "the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread" seems to imply that the *custom* of meeting to "break bread" on the first day of the week was already recognised and established. As was only natural, the Church being composed largely of Jews, the Jewish mode of reckoning time was still adhered to, *i.e.* the "Sunday" (as we call it) was supposed to begin at sunset on Saturday; just as the Jewish Sabbath, and every other day, was supposed to begin at sunset on the previous evening. So the disciples met together on

the eve of Sunday; they were addressed by S. Paul at great length, even until midnight, then came the incident of the young man falling asleep; and after that—*i.e.* on this occasion in the early hours of the morning—came the "breaking of the bread" followed by the Agape (γευσάμενος).

The next passage (earlier, indeed, in point of time than the former) is 1 Corinthians xvi. 2: "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."

Here, again, the mention of the "first day" is significant, and S. Paul's directions evidently presuppose that on that day there will be assemblies for worship. Here then, in Corinth, as well as in Troas, we find that assembling on the first day of the week has become an established custom.

One more passage remains, namely Revelation i. 10; here we have the words, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day."

This is the only occasion in Holy Scripture in which the phrase "Lord's day" is em-

ployed, though it may have arisen much earlier on the analogy of the "Lord's Supper." "At some time between A.D. 57 and A.D. 96 the term 'Lord's Day' arose, and it was probably first used in churches which had to contend with Judaism." Other interpretations of the expression have been suggested, but there is no reasonable doubt that it refers to the first day of the week, which thus again appears marked with a peculiar honour of its own.

Now, how are we to account for the first day of the week thus taking its place as the special day for Christians "assembling themselves together"? The answer is, I believe, a very simple one. In itself it was simply a matter of convenience, or even necessity. It is quite clear that if people are to meet together at all for common worship there must be certain times for their doing so. At first, in Jerusalem, they met daily. We can well see, however, that this daily assembling might not be, would not be, practicable always and everywhere. In that case it would be necessary to choose

some special days. The institution of the *week*, firmly established among the Jews, as among the Semites generally, would naturally prevail in communities like the Christian Churches, largely composed of Jews. (And, indeed, before the time of Hadrian, it came to prevail in the Roman Empire generally.) If daily assemblies were impracticable, it would be natural to arrange, at least, for weekly meetings. *Why* the first day of the week was the day chosen for these assemblies we are not told; but it is not hard to form a probable or even certain opinion. The "first day" of the week was already associated in the mind of every Christian with that great event which was the very centre of the Apostolic teaching and of the Christian faith, namely the resurrection of our Lord, who on the first day of the week "while it was yet dark" had left the tomb in the garden, and "when it was evening," on that day, the first day of the week, came and stood in the midst of His disciples. What more natural than that a day so

intimately associated with the triumph of their Lord should have become the special meeting day of His disciples?

Thus, then, we find the origin of the Christian Sunday is a matter of practical convenience. As a matter of convenience, some times for meeting together for worship, and especially for the "breaking of the bread," had to be arranged; the first day of the week had a peculiar interest for Christians, and was gradually accepted as a special day of assembly, and in time, probably from its association with the "Lord's Supper," came to be known as the "Lord's Day." There is, of course, no evidence that the practice was based on any command of our Lord, and the assumption that He ordered it in the "great forty days" after the Resurrection is both unproved and unprovable. Nay, it cannot even be shown that it was *established* by the Apostles, though it was evidently accepted and sanctioned by them. The custom grew, we know not how; it was simply the outcome of the life and worship of the Church.

But in all this it will be noticed :—

(1) That there is not the slightest or faintest hint of any connexion between the Lord's Day and the Sabbath. In fact, there *was* no such connexion. The two institutions rest, as I have tried to show, on entirely different bases. No Christian, who observed the Lord's Day by coming to the breaking of the bread, ever supposed that, in doing so, he was "keeping the Sabbath." Such a notion would, in fact, have been impossible, when the Sabbath was a well-known institution on a different day of the week, and was still being observed by many Jewish Christians, who hardly yet realised that "the old wine" could not be put into "new bottles"; and especially by those Judaising Christians who would have retained the Sabbath, circumcision, and all the rest of the Jewish Law—and whom S. Paul, in the interests of Christian liberty, so vigorously resisted. Certainly, if there had been any notion that the Lord's Day was simply the Sabbath transferred to another day of the week (though, for reasons I have just given,

this mistake could not have arisen), S. Paul would have been the last to countenance any such transference; and it is very significant that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not even hint at any *analogy* between the old Sabbath and the new Lord's Day, such as he sees, in some other cases, between Jewish and Christian institutions. It is, I suppose, hardly necessary to add that no stress can be laid on the frequent references in the Acts to Apostles preaching in synagogues, or in Jewish places of prayer, on the Sabbath day. "Their mission was to the Jews first, and apart from the natural desire on their own part to join in the only public worship available, common sense would lead them to go where they could address large bodies of Jews assembled with minds disposed to receive religious truth."*

(2) And, in the next place, there is not the slightest hint that, except for the meeting of worship, the first day of the week was otherwise observed in different fashion from any other day of the week. There is not the

* N. J. D. WHITE, *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iii. p. 140.

smallest reason to suppose that there was any cessation from work, as there certainly would have been had the early Christians supposed that the Lord's Day was governed by the fourth commandment. No doubt, they went to their work on the first, as on other days; or, at any rate, there is no jot or tittle of evidence to show that they did otherwise. When the Christian Sunday became, in later times, also a day of rest, it was for very good and sufficient reasons of its own that it so became. We shall see, in the course of these lectures, how and when it gradually and happily was generally established as a day of rest from toil.

Here, then, is the only view of the origin and meaning of the Christian Sunday which is, I believe, historically tenable. It was the spontaneous outcome of the Church's life and worship, and in itself it is simply what we should call a holy day of the Church—a holy day not as being, in the old Jewish sense, separate and intrinsically different from other days, but a day convenient for

public worship and commemorating a great event, namely, the resurrection of our Lord. In its principle it is not different from other holy days of the Church, commemorating particular events, and appointed as times of special devotion, with a view to deepening the spiritual life of men—*e.g.* Ascension Day, or Christmas Day, or Good Friday. In the Common Prayer Book, as you know, every Friday is appointed to be observed (in memory, of course, of the Crucifixion, just as every Sunday commemorates the Resurrection); and the special mode in which all such days are observed will naturally depend on the nature of the event which they commemorate. There is, however, *this* difference between Sunday and other holy days, that it is the *first* in its origin, that it was developed under the very eyes of the Apostles, and has obtained universal recognition in the Church of Christ; a recognition which has been accorded to no other day. And surely this is no small claim to honour. And if anyone object to my basing the observance of

Sunday on the authority of the Church, I will merely ask: What, after all, do we mean by the authority of the Church? We mean simply the practice and experience of the vast majority of Christians in all ages. Surely this is authority enough; surely a day which has come down to you from the very dawn of the Church's life, sanctioned by Apostles, consecrated by the devotion of ages, associated for nineteen hundred years with the "voice of joy and thanksgiving"; a day on which Christians have "rejoiced and been glad" as they held sweet communion with God and with one another; surely it comes to you with sufficient authority; an authority which is not less because, instead of being a Sabbath, bound and fettered by rules and regulations, it is redolent of that liberty which Christ brought to men, the freedom with which "He has made us free."

It will be my task in my next lecture to follow the history of Sunday in the first ages of the Church, with a view to showing that it was never called or regarded as "the

Sabbath," and then to trace the growth of the spirit, seen first in Mediævalism, and then again in Puritanism, which gradually obscured the true meaning of the Lord's Day.

LECTURE IV

SUNDAY IN THE EARLY CHURCH

LECTURE IV

"*This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.*"—Ps. cxviii. 24.

IN the last lecture our aim was to show the origin of the Lord's Day. It was due, as we saw, to the practical needs of Christians; the need of assembling at certain times for prayers and for "the breaking of the Bread." It was the outcome of the Church's life and worship, and was developed under the eyes of the Apostles. It gradually acquired a general recognition. But there is no evidence that, in the earliest times, it was otherwise observed in a different fashion from other days; and it is quite certain that it was not regarded as the successor of the Sabbath or supposed to be governed, in any way, by the fourth commandment.

That is the position which we ventured

to take, and which appears to be justified by the references in the New Testament to the Sabbath and to the Lord's Day. But it is clear that our position will be greatly fortified if we find that in the Church of the first three centuries the Lord's Day was observed as a day of worship, but was never confused with the Sabbath, nay, rather that it was, on the contrary, sharply distinguished from it. If "Sabbatarianism" (*i.e.* the theory that the Lord's Day is simply the Sabbath changed from the seventh day of the week to the first) finds no support either in the New Testament or in the primitive Church, one must confess that, however popular such a view may be to-day among religious people, it cannot be considered binding upon us. So let us (so far as time shall permit) listen to the voices of the Christian writers of the first three centuries of the Church's life; and in doing this let me say at once that for this and my succeeding lecture I am largely indebted to the labours of Dr. Hessey, who, in his *Bampton Lectures*, has dealt with this part of our subject so adequately, that

what he does not mention is hardly worth mentioning.

We naturally begin with Ignatius, who died a martyr's death about 110 A.D. In his Epistle to the Magnesians (ix.) he says: "If then, those who were brought up in old things (the practices of Judaism) came to a newness of hope, no longer keeping the Sabbath, but living after the Lord's Day, on which also our Light sprang up through Him and His death," etc., etc. The words "no longer keeping the Sabbath" and "living after the Lord's Day" will be noticed. "This 'living after the Lord's Day' signifies not merely the observance of it, but the appropriation of all those ideas and associations which are involved in its observance. It symbolises the hopes of the Christian who rises unto Christ's Resurrection as he dies into His Death. It implies the substitution of the spiritual for the formal in religion."*

We may next quote the well-known letter

* Bishop LIGHTFOOT, *Apostolic Fathers*, part ii. vol. ii. section i. p. 128.

of Pliny to Trajan, written in 112 A.D. He is talking about certain renegade Christians, who, on being charged with their religion, had venerated the images of the gods and cursed Christ; and he adds: "But they affirmed the whole of their guilt or error to have been that they had been accustomed to meet together on a stated day, before it was light, and to sing hymns to Christ as a God, and to bind themselves by a *Sacramentum*, not for any wicked purpose, but never to commit fraud, theft, or adultery; never to break their word, or to refuse, when called upon, to give up any trust. After which it was their custom to separate, and to assemble again to take a meal, but a general one, and without guilty purpose; but this very meal they had abandoned after his edict, in which, according to the Emperor's orders, he had forbidden clubs." I quote this letter merely as showing that, assuming the "stated day" to be Sunday, it was well established as a day of worship and Eucharist; but there is no mention of rest. So also in the *Doctrine of*

the Twelve Apostles we read: "And on the Lord's Day of the Lord, come together and break bread and give thanks." If we regard the *Doctrine* as a document of the second century,* we may find in it another early witness to the use of the Lord's Day as a day of worship.

We now come to Justin Martyr (*circa* 110–164 A.D.), who writes: "On the day called Sunday (he uses the heathen name of the day) there is a meeting of all who live in the cities or country, and the memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets are read, so far as time permits. When the reader has finished, the President addresses words of admonition, and exhorts us to imitate the good things we have heard. Then we all stand up together and utter prayers; and, as I said before, the prayer ended, bread and wine and water are brought in, as the President utters prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability, and the people assent by saying Amen, and the dis-

* But see BIGG, *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.* S.P.C.K.

tribution and participation of the consecrated elements follows, and a portion of them is taken by the deacons to those who are absent." Here, again, we see Sunday as a day of worship—a special day for the celebration of the Holy Communion—but it is not confused with the Sabbath by Justin. On the contrary, "he carefully distinguishes Saturday, the day after which our Lord was crucified, and Sunday, upon which He rose from the dead. He asserts that the Fathers before Abraham, and Abraham himself and his sons, up to the days of Moses, pleased God without keeping Sabbath; that, as before Abraham's days there was no need of circumcision, so before those of Moses there was no need of σαββατισμὸς and feasts and offerings. When he speaks of Christians keeping the *Sabbath*, it is in a purely symbolical sense; the Christian life, he declares, is all a Sabbath, and he condemns the Jews who make so much of being idle (ἀργοῦντες) on one day."* Here, it will be noticed, he treats the Sabbath in much the

* HESSEY, p. 43.

same way as the English Church explains the fourth commandment—"serve Him truly all the days of my life."

Similar witness is borne by Irenæus (180 A.D.), who says: "Abraham without circumcision and without observance of the Sabbath believed in God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. This is an evidence of the symbolical and temporary character of those ordinances, and of their inability to render the comers thereunto perfect";* and by Clement of Alexandria, both of whom mention the Lord's Day as a day of worship. The witness of Tertullian (200 A.D.) is very interesting. He argues against keeping the Sabbath, but he says "Sunday we give to joy. We consider it wrong to fast on the Lord's Day, or to pray kneeling during its continuance." And he also gives some information which has a special importance of its own. "But we, as we have received the tradition, on the one Lord's Day of the Resurrection ought to abstain,

* *Ibid.*, p. 44.

not only from bowing of the knee, but from all our ordinary cares and business employments, even putting off our business, lest we give place to the Devil." This is considered to be the first reference made by any writer to any abstinence from ordinary work on the Sunday. It may not, however, mean more than that worldly business was to be neglected rather than religious duties left undone; and, in any case, it is not based on Sabbatarian grounds.

It is unnecessary, I think, to multiply quotations. Suffice it to say that there is not known to be a single writer in the first three centuries of the Church who confounds Sunday with the Sabbath, or who, if he touches the subject at all, speaks of the Sabbath otherwise than as a Jewish institution, which, like circumcision, and the rest of the Mosaic Law, has had its day, and, for Christians, has ceased to be.

It is, of course, true, as I have said before, that the Sabbath was for some time observed by Jewish Christians, adhering naturally in this and some other respects to their ancient

customs, and we know that even S. Paul was very tolerant of their prejudices, so long as they did not threaten the liberty of other Christians. It is true, also, that in the Western Church, by the end of the third century, Saturday was largely observed as a fast;* but it was so observed not as the Sabbath, but simply as a continuation of the fast of Friday, the day which commemorated our Lord's crucifixion; and the main fact for which we have been contending remains unshaken, viz. that for the first three centuries Sunday was simply a special day of worship, and for the chief act of worship and fellowship, *i.e.* the Eucharist; and that it was entirely unfettered by any Church rules or regulations as to the manner in which it should otherwise be employed; though, as we saw from Tertullian, there were some, at any rate, at the end of the second century whose custom was, as far as possible, to abstain from ordinary work on the Lord's Day.

We come now to an event of great im-

* See Note A.

portance in the history of Sunday. In 321 A.D. the Emperor Constantine issued the following decree :—

"*The Emperor Constantine to Helpidius.*

"On the venerable day of the Sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in the work of cultivation may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits ; because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting ; lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of Heaven should be lost. Given the 7th day of March."*

What is the meaning of this decree? Some have regarded Constantine as the Christian magistrate, guarding by the power of the State a day already sanctified by the worship of the Church. This view, however, is very difficult to maintain. It will be noticed that the day is called "Sunday," not the Lord's Day. It is true that the

* HESSEY, p. 58.

Christian writer, like Justin Martyr, had not hesitated to use the heathen name of the day, and we ourselves do not hesitate. But its use by Constantine is significant, since it is well known that in his heathen days he had been especially devoted to the worship of the Sun, and this very decree was accompanied by another providing for the regular consulting of the auspices. He himself was indeed at this time on the threshold of the Church, but he remained on the threshold for many years, and was, in fact, not baptised until the hour of death. The truth would rather seem to be as follows: the heathen part of the population had many festivals which were largely observed as days of rest, and were regarded as *dies nefasti*, unfit for the transaction of business in the Law Courts; and, on the other hand, the Christians had their special day of worship, Sunday, when business of this kind would evidently be inconvenient or even impossible. It seems likely that Constantine wished to terminate this confusion, and sought to meet the needs and wishes of

all his subjects by selecting as a general holiday a day which the Christians specially regarded, and which, among the heathen, was venerated as the day of the Sun. This is all we can say. That the decree was in no way Sabbatarian is shown by its only applying to certain kinds of work, and leaving the labourer of the country to proceed as before. But whatever may have been Constantine's motives, the results of his action were important. It is quite probable, as I have said, that many Christians already abstained, to a certain extent, from ordinary work on the Lord's Day; but it now for the first time came to be formally recognised as a day of rest. And this recognition was, we might say, the beginning of the process by which Sunday has gradually become not only a day of worship, but a great social institution guarded and protected alike by the decree of the Church and by the power and sanction of the State.

The decree of Constantine, then, may well be taken as marking a new departure in the history of the Lord's Day; and as the

empire became Christian, and the arm of the State was called in to strengthen and support the Church, so the recognition of the Lord's Day encouraged the multiplication of holy days and holidays, and a new spirit slowly invades the Church. It is true that for two centuries or so the old sense of freedom largely remains. Restrictions are not too severe; and Jerome, for instance, in 392 speaks of certain pious ladies as going to church on Sundays and on returning home applying themselves to their allotted works, making garments for themselves or for others. Church Councils, while favouring rest, are full of warnings against doing so in a "Jewish" fashion; as, for instance, the Council of Laodicea in 363. So, too, when Theodosius the Great abolished the public games on Sunday in 386, it was not because on that day amusement in itself was considered wrong, but because the cruel nature of the amusement was not of a kind to be associated with a day of worship. But there is no doubt that little by little the old spirit of liberty is more and more restricted,

and, as this happens, so naturally men's minds turn back to the legalism of the Jewish system; they begin to look for analogies to Christian institutions in the old Law; the Christian ministry is found in the Levitical priesthood, the Christian holy days in the Jewish, and at last Sunday in the Sabbath. Perhaps it was inevitable. As the barbarian nations streamed into the Church, ignorant and untamed, so liberty became more and more difficult, law more and more necessary. Once more men had to be treated as children—for indeed the true childhood of the Church is not the first five centuries, but rather those from the fifth to the tenth. We shall see in our next lecture the growth of this spirit. We shall see, for instance, how the expression "Christian Sabbath" as a description of Sunday, which many people regard as biblical, appears for the first time in the twelfth century after Christ. We shall see also by what a curious process the Puritans, escaping from and protesting against mediæval legalism, forged a new legalism

of their own. But before we come to this, let us keep in our minds the picture of the Lord's Day in the early Church; a day of joyful worship, of Eucharistic celebration, of loving fellowship; a day on which Christians commemorated the resurrection of their Lord, and themselves strove to rise to newness of life; a day, not of petty restrictions, but of free devotions; of which it might in truth be said, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."

NOTE A.

By the fifth, or end of the fourth, century the Sabbath was also observed in the East as a *Festival.* See *Apostolical Constitutions:* "Keep as festivals the Sabbath and the Lord's Day" (book vii.). "Let the slaves work on five days; but let them be at leisure on the Sabbath and the Lord's Day" (book viii.). These expressions show that there was a reversion to Judaism, but Sunday and the Sabbath are none the less quite distinct.

LECTURE V

SUNDAY

(A) IN THE MIDDLE AGES
(B) AT THE REFORMATION

LECTURE V

"*Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh?*"—GAL. iii. 3.

WE saw in our last lecture that the great note of the Lord's Day in the first three centuries of the Church was *freedom*. It was a day on which Christians met of their own free will to worship God, but they were not careful to separate it in other respects from other days. Their aim was to "serve God truly all the days of their life." But after Constantine had, whatever may have been his motives, made Sunday a day of rest, at least in the towns, from ordinary occupations, and as the State became professedly Christian, so a tendency was manifested to enforce its observance by penalties, both ecclesiastical and civil. So, too, the multiplication of holy days induced men to seek for analogies to their

own festivals in the Jewish Law; the Sabbath became a kind of "type" of the Lord's Day, and later still is actually identified with it. Still, up to the end of the fifth century there is, says Dr. Hessey,* no clearly genuine passage in any writer or in any public document, ecclesiastical or civil, in which the fourth commandment is referred to as the ground of obligation to observe the Lord's Day. After that date, however, the change of tone becomes clearer. It may be due in part, as I said in my last lecture, to the fact that the new nations which were flowing into the Church required law rather than liberty; but the fact remains, that from the sixth century ecclesiastical rules and restrictions are greatly multiplied, and "Sabbatarianism" becomes more and more strongly marked. Thus a Council† of 585 enjoins that "No one should allow himself on the Lord's Day to put a yoke on the necks of his cattle, but all be occupied in mind and body in the hymns and the

* Lecture III., p. 86, *Bampton Lectures.*

† HESSEY, p. 87.

praise of God. For this is the day of perpetual rest; this is shadowed out to us by the seventh day in the Law and the Prophets." Still, even in this Council there is a recognition of the true origin of the Lord's Day—"keep the Lord's Day, whereon we are born anew and freed from all sins."

And so things go on. In the ninth century, at two Councils held, the one at Maintz, the other at Rheims, in the reign of Charles the Great, canons were made against doing servile work on the Lord's Day, and the prohibition was grounded on "the Lord's command," by which presumably is meant the fourth commandment.

In England, from the seventh to the twelfth century, the laws on Sunday observance are very numerous. King Ina, of Wessex (in 673), and the Council of Berkhampstead (in 697) forbade all work;* the Council of Cloveshoe (in 747) forbade travelling; and in a law of Edgar the Peaceable (in 958) we find that the Lord's

* HESSEY, p. 89.

Day is to commence* at "three o'clock in the afternoon of Saturday, and to last until dawn on Monday." So it is not surprising to find Alcuin in the eighth century boldly stating that "the observation of the former Sabbath had been transferred very fitly to the Lord's Day by the custom and consent of Christian people"; or, in the twelfth century, S. Bernard of Clairvaux grounding the Lord's Day and the other holy days on the fourth commandment.† It is in this century, too, that the term "Christian Sabbath" is heard for the first time. So, too, a writer of the same century, Eustace, Abbot of Floy, tells all kinds of stories about the "judgments" which had descended on neglect of Sunday, which he also considered to begin at three on Saturday: "A woman weaving after three o'clock on Saturday was struck with the dead palsy. A man that made a cake at the same time, when he came to eat it on the Lord's Day

* It may be interesting to mention that in the eighteenth century George Whitfield always commenced his Sunday at 6 p.m. on Saturday. (See ANDREWS' *Life of Whitfield*, p. 418.)

† HESSEY, p. 90.

morning, blood flowed from it"; — tales which seem to be the spiritual ancestors of those story-books of our childhood in which boys who went boating on Sundays usually met with a watery grave. S. Thomas Aquinas, too, speaks of the Sabbath as "changed to" the Lord's Day, and Archbishop Chichele, in the fifteenth century, actually calls Sunday "the seventh day which the Lord blessed, which He sanctified, and in which, after the work of the six days, He rested from His work."

The tendency to burden Sunday with minute regulations is perhaps most strikingly seen in one case, cited by Dr. Hessey,* namely that of Tostatus, Bishop of Avila, in the fourteenth century; in his commentary on Exodus xii. we read such passages as these: "A cook that on holy days is hired to make a feast or dress the dinner, commits a mortal sin; but not if he be hired by the month or year." "Meat may be dressed upon the Lord's Day or the other holy days, but to wash dishes on those days

* Page 91.

is unlawful." "A man that travels on holy days, to some special shrine or saint, commits no sin, but he commits sin if he returns home on those days." As we read this kind of thing we are at once reminded of the petty and elaborate distinctions made by the later Rabbis between what was "lawful" and "unlawful" on the Sabbath; and we find it easier to understand the fiery remonstrance of S. Paul as he detected similar dangers in the Galatian churches: "Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now perfected in the flesh? . . . With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

It must not, however, be supposed that even in the Middle Ages there were no voices to protest against this casuistry. There were those who saw and denounced the renaissance of Judaism. There were others, too—but they were sectaries, such as the Waldenses or the Lollards—who in angry rebellion against the authority of the Church refused to acknowledge the Lord's

Day or any other holy days. It is only fair also to remember that in multiplying her regulations for the observance of Sunday and other holy days, the Church was animated, at least in part, by a desire to save the labouring classes from excessive toil, and to procure for them seasons of rest and refreshment. Though work was so sternly forbidden on Sundays, recreations of various kinds were freely allowed, and if the Church became inquisitive and tyrannical, she, at least, withstood any tyrannies but her own. There are two passages from a modern writer * which set forth both sides of the Church's action, at least as far as England was concerned. On the one side: "The Canon Law by its jurisdiction *pro salute animæ* entered into every man's house, attempted to regulate his servants, to secure his attendance at church, to make him pay his debts, to make him observe his oaths, to make him by spiritual censures, which by alliance with the State had coercive

* Canon CAPES' *History of the English Church in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, p. 371.

force, by the dread of a *capias excommunicatum*, keep all the weightier matters of the law, not only justice, mercy, and truth, but faith, hope, and charity also. There was obvious overlapping, therefore, in the provinces of the Common and the Canon Law, and consequent friction between the agents of the rival courts. It was much to be deplored that the Courts Christian were generally mistrusted and disliked." And on the other side: "If the Church laid a heavy load upon her children, and vexed them with her discipline, worked by questionable agents and in irritating forms, on the other hand she showed her sympathy with the people's pleasures, and did what she could to give brightness and gaiety to the social life of the humblest and poorest. Her holy days became the people's holidays. While the manorial custumals formulated the long catalogue of the forced labours which every serf in old times rendered to his lord, so many days to plough and reap and cast and spread manure on the lord's land, the Church's almanac prescribed her

days not of rest only, but of innocent enjoyment, the village festival in honour of the patron saint in the one building in the parish where all could meet as equals; the solemn seasons of the year on which she claimed for them a brief respite from their worldly cares."

We come now to the period of the Reformation. It would, of course, be impossible in a brief lecture to discuss the causes of that great movement which assumed so many different shapes in different countries, but at least one may venture to say that it was, above all else, the revolt of individualism against an authoritative tradition. The revival of learning had resulted in the discovery, if one may so put it, of the worth and value of the individual soul, the individual life. The result of that revival might be, and was, either religious or irreligious. On one side the revival of classical antiquity awakened men to the pleasures and beauties of this present life, and made them discontented with the narrow

windows and the cloistered gloom of the Church; eager to throw off the shackles of morality and religion. On the other side, the re-discovery, as one may call it, of the Scriptures, made them impatient of that system of discipline, which had practically obscured the liberty of the gospel, and more conscious of the need of an active faith and a personal communion with God. Such a doctrine as Luther's "Justification by Faith only," summed up the meaning of this revolt in a single sentence; it reduced religion very largely to a matter of personal experience, and cut at the very root of the Church's system of discipline. To Luther the Church was a "house of bondage" from which he had escaped, and all remnants of that "bondage" as he esteemed it—such as the compulsory observance of holy days—were abhorrent to him. Nor did he, or the other continental reformers, trouble much about the difference between one holy day or another. The notion that the Lord's Day rested on a divine command and the other holy days on merely human commands—that notion so

common to-day—was not entertained for a moment. All stood for them on the same level, and though the Lord's Day, as a convenient time for worship, was tolerated by them, they were never weary of protesting against its being regarded as having any inherent sanctity of its own. The language of Luther, indeed, in his *Table Talk* is almost startling:—

"If anywhere the day is made holy for the mere day's sake, if anywhere anyone sets up its observance on a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on Christian liberty."*

Similar, though less striking, language is used in Luther's *Larger Catechism* and, indeed, in many of the documents of foreign Reformers. Thus, the *Confession of Augsburg*, in 1531, has language to the following effect:† "Those who judge that in the place of the Sabbath the Lord's Day was instituted as a day to be necessarily observed

* HESSEY, p. 167. † HESSEY, p. 168.

are greatly mistaken. Scripture abrogated the Sabbath and teaches that all Mosaic ceremonies may be omitted now that the Gospel is revealed. And yet, forasmuch as it was needful to appoint a certain day that the people might know when they ought to assemble together, it appears that the Church destined the Lord's Day to that purpose. The day seems to have rather pleased them, in order that men might have thereby proof of Christian liberty, and know that the observance, whether of the Sabbath or of the other day, was not a matter of necessity."

Bucer writes: "To think that working on the Lord's Day is in itself a sin is a superstition, and a denying of the grace of Christ."

To the same effect speaks Calvin, and, indeed, such is the language of all the earlier reformers of the Continent. When we come to England we find men like Tyndale and Frith saying, the one that "We be lords over the Sabbath, and might change it into Monday, or into any other day as we see need, or may make any

tenth day holy day only, if we see cause why. Neither was there any cause to change it from Saturday, but to put a difference between ourselves and the Jews; neither need we any holy day at all, if the people might be taught without it"; the other that those who superstitiously observe Sunday are "much madder" than Jews who superstitiously observed Saturday; "and we have not the Word of God for us, but rather against us; for we keep not the seventh day as the Jews do, but the first, which is not commanded by God."*

I quote this language, not as agreeing with all of it, but as displaying the anti-sabbatarian tone, very strong in its own way. Archbishop Cranmer gives two reasons for observing Sunday; the one that "Sunday and the other holy days were appointments of the magistrates," the other that "the Church has ordained the Sunday." These views are not very consistent with each other, but they agree in not referring Sunday to the fourth commandment. When we

* Hessey, p. 198.

come to the authorised formulas and documents of the English Church we find indeed in the Homilies a practical identification of Sunday with the Sabbath; but the Homilies have never been regarded as possessing a permanent significance, and in the Prayer-book itself "all Sundays in the year" take their place, though the first place, among "the feasts that are to be observed in the Church of England throughout the year"; while in the Church catechism the explanation of the fourth commandment is simply "to serve God truly all the days of my life."*

But it is hardly necessary to remind you that the conservative nature of the Reformation of the English Church was far from pleasing to many who had drunk deep, at home or abroad, of the "new wine" of ecclesiastical revolt. In the reign of Elizabeth there grew up a body of men, known later as the Puritans, who desired to break utterly with the traditions of the past. To them all "holy days" savoured of Popery, of superstition, of bondage. They could

* See Note A.

receive nothing on the authority of the Church. And, indeed, the authority of the Church, or of any religion, was at a very low ebb during the greater part of Elizabeth's reign. The weakening of religious traditions had resulted, not unnaturally, in the weakening of religion itself. Religious observance of all kinds tended to fall into disuse. The old protection of the poor against excessive labour on holy days had so far disappeared that in one of Queen Elizabeth's injunctions it is expressly said that "if for any scrupulosity or grudge of conscience some should superstitiously abstain from working on Sundays and holy days, they shall grievously offend," while she also granted a licence to one John Seconton "to use certain plays and games on nine several Sundays."* Now the Puritans, as religious men, saw very well that, though liberty might be very desirable, yet the want of a stated day of worship would most assuredly mean in the end the decay of religion. What, then, was to be done?

* HESSEY, p. 201.

They could not appeal to the authority or custom of the Christian Church, for in place of an infallible Church they had substituted an infallible Book, and had declared that nothing which was not commanded in the Scriptures could be binding on men. Here was the difficulty. Only one thing was to be done, *they must find the observance of Sunday commanded in the Scriptures.* They opened their Bibles, and though they certainly failed to find any biblical command to observe the Lord's Day they found a great deal about "keeping the Sabbath." So they seized the only chance they could find; they boldly identified the Jewish Sabbath with the Christian Sunday, and then proceeded to apply to the latter all the rules which they found attached to the former.

Having once taken this step, the rest was comparatively easy. There were, of course, some obvious difficulties. The Sabbath was the seventh day, and Sunday the first. This they got over by teaching that the divine principle lay in the one day in seven. And

so on. A book published by Dr. Bound in 1595 was the fullest expression of this spirit, and among his main propositions we find the following :—*

(1) That the commandment sanctifying every seventh day, as in the Mosaic Decalogue, is moral and perpetual.

(2) That whereas all other things in the Jewish Church were taken away (priesthood, sacrifices, sacraments), their Sabbath was so changed that it yet remaineth.

(4) The rest upon this day must be a notable and singular rest, a most careful, exact, and precise rest, after another manner than men are accustomed.

(10) All honest recreations and pleasures lawful on other days (as shooting, fencing, and bowling) are on this day to be forborne.

(11) No man is to speak or talk of pleasures, or any other worldly matter.

* Hessey, p. 206.

This book of Dr. Bound's was strongly condemned by Archbishop Whitgift, but it would appear to have had considerable influence upon the public opinion of his day. The growing strength of the Puritans enforced a rigid observance of the Lord's Day to which the English people had never been accustomed, and which many of them strongly resented. It was this popular feeling that induced James I., in 1618, to issue the *Declaration of Sports*—subsequently republished by Charles I. It ran as follows :—

"And as for our good people's lawful Recreation, our pleasure likewise is, that after the end of Divine Service our good people be not disturbed, letted or discouraged from any lawful recreations, such as dancing either men or women, archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmless recreations; nor from having of May-Games, Whitsun Ales and Morris-dances and the setting up of May-poles and other sports hitherto used so as the same be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of Divine Service; and that women

shall have leave to carry rushes to the Church for the decorating of it, according to their old customs. But withal we do here account still as prohibited all unlawful games to be used upon Sunday only as Bear and Bull baiting, Interludes, and, at all times in the meaner sort of people, by law prohibited, Bowling."

This declaration, of course, lays itself open to the charge of making a somewhat arbitrary distinction between lawful and unlawful recreations, but there is no doubt, I think, that it was an honest attempt to restore the cheerfulness of Sunday without impairing its character as a day of worship. The Puritans indeed considered it a "tyranny," and many of them left England to join their brethren, who had already settled in Holland. But Holland failed to satisfy them, and in 1620, and again in 1629, a large body of "Pilgrim Fathers" quitted Holland for the American Plantations. Here, at last, was an opening for the establishment of a Sunday after their own hearts; and some of the results may be seen in such documents as the form of rules drawn up by John Cotton, a minister, which

were intended as a draft of the laws of the Colony of Massachusetts :—*

"No one shall run on the Sabbath day, or walk in his garden or elsewhere, except reverently to and from meeting."

"No one shall travel, cook victuals, make beds, sweep house, cut hair or shave on the Sabbath day."

Or in the Code drawn up by Governor Eaton for New Haven Colony in 1656 :—†

"Whosoever shall profane the Lord's Day, or any part of it, by work or sport, shall be punished by fine or corporally. But if the court by clear evidence find that the sin was proudly, presumptuously, and with a high hand committed against the command and authority of the Blessed God, such person therein despising and reproaching the Lord shall be put to death."

"If any man shall kiss his wife, or wife kiss her husband on the Lord's Day, the party in fault shall be punished at the discretion of the Court of Magistrates."

More than one hundred years later, during

* HESSEY, p. 212. † HESSEY, p. 371.

the war of American Independence, Dr. Johnson complained, in a famous sentence, that "the loudest yelps for liberty came from the drivers of the slave"; in a similar way we may note that this most tyrannical inquisition proceeded from the men who left England to escape "the tyranny of the Lord Bishops." As we read some of these regulations we are reminded at once of those mediæval restrictions of which I have already given you some specimens. So, extremes meet; but the Puritan tyranny was far graver than the mediæval. The latter, at least, permitted recreation; the former, choosing to believe—though the belief was utterly groundless—that the Jewish Sabbath was a day of profound gloom, was equally severe on work and recreation. To some, indeed, it may appear that the time which I have spent in dealing with Puritan Sabbatarianism has been wasted. "At least," they will say, "this danger is passed now; our peril lies in the opposite direction of extreme laxity." My answer must be that, although this kind of Puritanism may

be extinct, the Sabbatarian theory of Sunday inherited from the Puritans is still held by a large number, perhaps the majority of religious people. And false theories are always dangerous. If we are ever to have a reasonable and healthy Sunday in England it will have to be based, not on an exploded Sabbatarianism, but on Christian principles. I shall try in my next lecture to see what those principles are, and how we may hope to advance them. The extreme positions of Sabbatarianism and Secularism are, of course, easy to state, and they are often represented as the only alternatives. But it must be our task to steer between them, by the light of Christ's teaching, and to care less to avoid what is dangerous than to seek for that truth which so often

> "Turns to scorn with lips divine
> The falsehood of extremes."

NOTE A.

This interpretation of the fourth commandment may well be borne in mind when in the Communion Service the people are directed to say, "Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." It must further be remembered that when at the Savoy Conference the Presbyterian party proposed to add to "all the days of my life" the words "especially on the Lord's Day" the request was deliberately refused.

Churchmen may well rejoice at their own liberty when they compare the Catechism of the English Church with the Presbyterian "Shorter Catechism" of 1648, where the fourth commandment is dealt with as follows:—

Q. 58. What is required in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as He has appointed in His Word, separating one day in seven to be a holy Sabbath to Himself.

Q. 59. Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath; and the first day of the week ever since to continue

to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

Q. 60. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?

A. The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is taken up in the works of necessity and mercy.

Q. 61. What is forbidden in the fourth commandment?

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required and the profaning of the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works about our worldly employments or recreations.

The second of these answers is a tissue of unhistorical statements; the last might almost appear to point to the conclusion that idleness and sin are permissible on week days.

LECTURE VI

SUNDAY AT THE PRESENT DAY

LECTURE VI

"*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.*"—REV. i. 10.

"*For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another.*"—GAL. v. 13.

IT may be convenient if, at the beginning of this lecture, I try to recall, in a very few words, some of the positions which I have tried to maintain, and to sum up the result of our inquiry into the history of the Lord's Day. We began by dwelling upon the origin and nature of the Jewish Sabbath. Its origin we ascribed to the legislation of Moses, who may have adopted and purified a weekly festival already long known to the Semitic peoples, and "obviously connected with the seventh day periods of the moon." To believe this is not to disparage the institution of the Sabbath. We do not think the human race less divine because it has been developed from lower forms. We

also found that the ancient conception of a holy day or a holy place was that of a day or place separated from other days or places and dedicated to a god or gods; therefore to be observed or entered in a solemn manner or with certain rites and ceremonies marking its sanctity. The notion that certain separate days or places belonged to God and must be surrendered to Him, though a very imperfect one in itself, yet marks a stage in the education of the world. Holy days and places, carefully guarded, protected by strict rules, were necessary for men who could not yet grasp the higher notion that the "earth is the Lord's and the fulness of it," and that not a part, but the whole of life belongs to God. This higher notion of religion, which would "saturate life with God and earth with heaven," was enunciated by our Lord, who, coming "in the fulness of time," destroyed the ritual distinction between "clean" and "unclean" meats, and taught that the true worship of God was not the worship rendered at this or that shrine, but the service which was offered

"in spirit and in truth." Before this higher conception of religion, the notion of a Sabbath day, having an inherent sanctity of its own, naturally passed away; passed away, that is, for all who, like S. Paul, had grasped the teaching of Jesus, and who himself reckoned "Sabbaths" among the "shadows" which had disappeared before the "Body" of Christ.

Then we saw that when, in the history of the Christian Church, the "Lord's Day" emerged, it appeared, not as a Sabbath inherently different from other days and requiring a special observance of its own, but simply as a day convenient for public worship—the assembling for "breaking the bread"—being, no doubt, recommended for that purpose by the memory that Christ had risen "on the first day of the week." The "Lord's Day," as it came to be called (not that it was considered to belong to the Lord more than any other day, but probably for its associations with the Lord's Supper), was, without doubt, recognised, if not established, by the Apostles (S. John and S. Paul directly

mention it, one by that name, the other simply as the "first day of the week") as a special day of worship, and what is more remarkable, it has remained so ever since in the Christian Church. A day of worship. That is its note. There is no reason to suppose that it was at first otherwise observed differently from other days. There is no mention of abstaining from ordinary work until about the year 200 A.D., and it was only after the conversion of the Empire that it was generally observed as a day of rest, and became not only a Church but a State institution. It is still later that the notion that any work which was *right* on other days could be *wrong* on Sundays gradually appears, and that a tendency is exhibited to confuse Sunday with the Sabbath and to base its observance on the fourth commandment. This was, in fact, the work of the Middle Ages, when Christian liberty was largely curtailed by Church discipline, and there was a return to Judaic modes of thought. We saw, however, that in the Middle Ages, when most work was prohibited

(no doubt, on the whole, with beneficial results), recreations were freely permitted. At the Reformation the first tendency of the reformers was to free themselves from all holy days, including Sunday, as an infringement on personal liberty, and it was only because some special day of worship was a practical necessity that men like Luther consented to recognise it, not without many cautions against the danger of resting it on a Jewish basis. It was in a strange and startling contrast to this spirit that the English and Scotch Puritans, in their eagerness to disparage the authority of the Church, having laid down the proposition that nothing not ordered in Scripture could be binding on men, and also feeling the practical need of a special day of worship, not finding the observance of the Lord's Day *commanded* in the New Testament, boldly identified it with the Sabbath, and arrived, though by a different road, at the mediæval "Sabbatarianism" which the first reformers had so emphatically denounced. But the Sabbatarianism of the Puritans was distinguished from that of the

Middle Ages by the fact that it prohibited not only work, but also recreation, and we saw the full bloom of this Puritanism in those regulations which, in the Puritan States of America, forbade a man even to walk in his garden on "the Sabbath day."

So far we had reached, and of the historical aspect of the matter we need not say much more. Before the close of the seventeenth century the "body" of Puritanism may be said to have perished in England, but its "spirit" remained, sometimes for good sometimes for evil, in a large portion of society, especially in the middle classes. The larger part of the eighteenth century was not conspicuous for religious fervour, but when, under the influence of Wesley and Whitfield, the great movement took place which is sometimes called the "Evangelical Revival," the resuscitation of the Puritan spirit was seen, as in other ways, so also in the increased severity of Sunday observance. We read of George III., who was greatly influenced by the religious movement, rebuking Archbishop Cornwallis

on account of his Sunday routs* at Lambeth; and we are told of a prominent evangelical clergyman — Mr. Grimshaw — that "he endeavoured to suppress the generally prevailing custom in country places during the summer of walking in the fields on a Lord's Day between the services, or in the evening, in companies. He not only bore his testimony against it from the pulpit, but reconnoitred the fields in person to detect and reprove delinquents."†

It was in Scotland rather than in England that this spirit attained its highest development, but there can, I think, be no doubt that, however much we may admire and ought to admire the genuine piety of the early evangelicals, the observance of Sunday

* But he absolutely refused to listen to the entreaties of Bishop Porteus to discontinue the Sunday bands at Windsor. These bands greatly irritated the Sabbatarians of the day, Sir J. Stonehouse writing to Hannah More: "The music on the terrace on Sundays is pregnant with evil from Windsor to London; and oh! what an irreligious example to the youths of Eton!" (see ABBEY and OVERTON'S *English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. ii. p. 519).

† HESSEY, p. 219.

became a terrible burden on the hearts, more especially of the young, who could hardly have been cheered by the information that, if they were very good, they might eventually hope to go to a place where they would spend a "perpetual Sabbath." The distinguished author of *Alice in Wonderland* in another of his books (*Silvie and Bruno*) gives us a letter "received from a lady," from which I make the following extracts.

"When, as a child, I first opened my eyes on Sunday morning, a feeling of dismal anticipation, which began at least on Friday, culminated. I knew what was before me, and my wish, if not my word, was, 'Would God it were evening.' It was no day of rest, but a day of texts, of catechisms (Watts'), of tracts about converted swearers, godly charwomen, and edifying deaths of sinners saved.

"Up with the lark, hymns and portions of Scripture had to be learned by heart till eight o'clock, when there were family prayers, then breakfast, which I was never

able to enjoy, partly from the fast already undergone, and partly from the outlook I dreaded.

"At nine came Sunday-school. . . . The Church service was a veritable wilderness of Zin. I wandered in it, pitching the tabernacle of my thoughts on the lining of the square family pew, the fidgets of my small brothers, and the horror of knowing that on Monday I should have to write out from memory jottings of the rambling, disconnected, extemporary sermon, which might have had any text but its own, and to stand or fall by the result.

"This was followed by a cold dinner at one (servants to have *no* work), Sunday-school again from two to four, and evening service at six. The intervals were perhaps the greateat trials of all, from the efforts I had to make to be less than usually sinful by reading books and sermons as barren as the Dead Sea. There was but one rosy spot, in the distance, all that day, and that was 'bed-time,' which could never come too early."

I do not wish to be blind to the nobler

aspect of the state of things revealed in this description. We can see that, at any rate, people who thought it right to make Sunday a day of this sort were in earnest; that they had ideals of their own which, however perverted, were far higher than those of many of the Sunday pleasure-seekers of our own day. We can imagine also that souls, which had passed through the fire of this discipline, if not ruined by the process, may and often must have come out with a strength that is sometimes lacking in characters reared in a gentler fashion. But this was no festival to "rejoice and be glad" in, and it is pathetic to remember that this sort of Sunday was really due—not to the teaching of Christ,—but to a totally wrong conception of the nature of the Lord's Day and even of the Christian religion; a conception formed in entire ignorance of the nature and origin of the Lord's Day; a wilful and unbiblical determination to identify it with the extinct Jewish Sabbath, and, even then, a complete ignorance of the way in which the Sabbath itself was observed by the Jews.

It is, perhaps, no wonder that against such methods of Sunday observance we have witnessed in our own day a fierce revolt; a revolt which threatens at least, to result in the complete "secularisation" of Sunday by a large portion of the people. How are we to check that spirit of revolt? Of one thing I am quite certain, namely, that nothing could be more disastrous than to attempt to ground Sunday observance on what I believe to be an utterly false Sabbatarian basis; and it is, I venture to think, a matter of great regret that societies which profess to aim, and no doubt sincerely, at preserving and guarding the Christian Sunday, usually employ language which cannot be defended, and use arguments which will not bear investigation. To begin with, they almost invariably call the Lord's Day the "Sabbath," which, by itself, creates a false impression, and presupposes a connexion of the Lord's Day with the Sabbath, which, as I have tried to show, does not exist. Then they almost invariably indulge in a futile casuistry which arbitrarily pronounces some forms of

work to be wrong, while it leaves others, which it chooses to call works of necessity, though they are not so, quite untouched. They take for granted certain fallacies, and from false premises deduce conclusions which are necessarily false also. What, for instance, can be more fatuous than an anecdote like this:—"A lady, one Sunday, was stepping into an omnibus, Bible in hand, when the conductor remarked, 'Make room for the lady that's going to heaven herself, but shuts us poor chaps out"? I select this anecdote as it happens to lie before me, but it is only one, and by no means the most foolish, of many such that adorn current Sabbatarian literature.

No; if we are to commend Sunday to the people, we must eschew all false arguments, and be content to set it upon a Christian, not a Jewish basis. And when we consider the origin and history of the Lord's Day, we shall find that while, for reasons already set forth at sufficient length, it is neither right nor possible to bind it with strict rules, there are certain broad principles in the observance

of Sunday which we should clearly and earnestly enunciate, principles which may be set forth under two heads :—

1. *Worship.* Sunday is, was from the beginning, always has been, the great day of Christian worship. This is, as we have seen, its original note. As a day of worship, and as that alone, it appeared in the earliest age of the Christian Church. There can be no substitute for the duty which is laid upon all who "profess and call themselves Christians" to take their share in public worship on the Lord's Day. As to the exact amount of time which should be devoted to this duty, I will not attempt to express an opinion ; if the principle is once accepted, we may well be content to leave it to the conscience of the individual to determine questions of this kind. As to the nature of the service or services which he will attend, I will say nothing beyond this—that the earliest disciples met "to break the bread," and that if we profess to care for primitive models, we shall hardly be indifferent to their practice and example. It is indeed a most astounding thing, when

we consider it, that so completely has the original meaning of the Lord's Day been obscured—so long has Sunday been regarded mainly as a day for *not* doing something or other—*not* to work, *not* to play—that many who seldom enter a place of worship on that day, who never attend a celebration of the Lord's Supper, pride themselves, because they do not work or play, on "keeping the Sabbath." Keeping a Sabbath they may be; observing the Lord's Day in a Christian manner they certainly are not; and we need a far deeper sense of corporate religion to make people understand that common worship, rather than private sloth, is the duty of those who belong to the body of Christ, and are "members one of another."

It is, of course, quite true that worship, if offered in "spirit and in truth," is quite as effectual upon one day as another. S. Paul warns us against considering one day in itself different from another. The notion that churches should only be opened once a week, or that, as an old gentleman in Devonshire once put it, "Week-day services

are an insult to Sunday," is not one that I should desire to encourage. So, too, there may be some Christians who are in such constant communion with God that they may need for themselves no special hours of prayer or worship;* but if such there be, we may point out to them that even they are in grave danger of forgetting the social aspect of religion if they refrain from worshipping with their brethren in the congregation. When, however, we have made all deductions that it is possible to make, the fact remains that, for the vast majority of men, religion without public worship becomes practically inoperative; that if we are to have public worship, there must be special times and seasons; that Sunday, from its origin and associations, has a special claim as a day of worship upon Christians. "The world is too much with us," and it is surely meet if a man, in the midst of the "things which are seen," can sometimes exclaim with

* "Qui profundius in mundi negotiis hærent, his utilis et necessarius est dies definitus; qui semper sabbatizant, majori libertate gaudent" (BENGEL).

S. John, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day."

2. *Rest.* Rest on Sundays from ordinary toil, as far as may be—this is the other great principle for which we must contend. It is, of course, quite true that the Lord's Day in the beginning was not, so far as we know, associated with the principle of rest from ordinary labour. That, as we saw, came later; it came when Sunday was recognised by the State, and became a social as well as ecclesiastical institution. It is true, also, that no work which is *right* on week-days can be *wrong* on Sundays. Such a notion would indeed be anti-Christian and eminently *Judaic.* So there is no need of that fussy casuistry which, in the Middle Ages (and since) has tried to distinguish between "lawful" and "unlawful" work on the Lord's Day. If people would only think more of what is *right* to do on week days, if they would purify and elevate "business life," they need not trouble much about what is *wrong* on Sunday. But although the notion of rest was not associated with

the Lord's Day in its origin, it has come to be associated with it since in a most natural and legitimate way. For there can be no question that men need days of respite from ordinary toil, and experience shows, I think, very clearly, that one day in seven, as a day of rest, is an admirable institution which fairly meets the requirements of human nature; and surely no day can be considered better fitted for this purpose than that which also commemorates the resurrection of Christ who died and rose again that He might set His people free. It is indeed the Church of Christ which won this great boon for the people; and though her restrictions or rules were not always conceived in the spirit of freedom, yet the fact remains that the "Church's holy days became the people's holidays." Of these holidays Sunday alone remains; the rest (at one time no doubt too numerous) have vanished, and in their place a few festivals, called very significantly, not Church, but Bank, holidays, have been restored by an age which has consistently worshipped at the altars of mammon.

It is, then, surely in the highest interests of the labouring classes, as of the nation generally, that, although indeed under the conditions of modern society some kinds of work on Sunday are practically inevitable, that we still steadily resist every movement likely unduly to deprive the people of their weekly day of rest. And, it must be added, the leaders of the working classes are fully alive to the need of preserving what they at present possess. Mr. John Burns, M.P., recently used words which are worth quoting :—

"In all his experience of movements for the improvement of the condition of the people, he knew of none which had been so universally popular and so unanimous as the British protest against the publication of the seven-day paper. The solidarity which the skilled and unskilled workmen of this country had shown on this question had been one of the most remarkable manifestations of modern times ; and there was a very simple reason for that. Whenever labour representatives visited England, he

found that there was one institution to which they attached the supremest importance, and that was the relative abstinence—one might say the absolute immunity—of the British working-classes from the Sunday labour which was so well known on the Continent and in America. He believed the Sunday rest was physically good, mentally restful, and morally healthful, and that incidentally it had been commercially advantageous to the British people. He believed that the Day of Rest, commonly called Sunday, was the day which had done more than anything else to buttress and maintain that excellent institution called the home. Without Sunday the home would cease to have that advantage which it had previously enjoyed, and no man could say that merely providing one day's rest in seven was as good as the universally accepted Sunday. In a word, the Sunday, as the Day of Rest, was from nearly every point of view a national treasure and an industrial advantage."

But while we would carefully preserve Sunday as a day of rest, the question still

remains, What is rest? Certainly mere inactivity is not rest, for all. Men need not merely rest but recreation, which may be active or passive in its character. A man's rest or recreation must depend on the nature of his work. A professional cricketer would not seek rest in bowling on Sundays, but a man working long hours in the City might find refreshment in bodily exercise. A City clerk and an agricultural labourer will rest in different fashions. In short, we find ourselves facing the vexed question of the lawfulness of Sunday amusements. Those who accept my view of the nature of the Lord's Day will not be surprised that, as with work so with recreation, I hold the belief that nothing which is right on week-days can be wrong on Sundays. It is a question of expediency and charity. On the one hand we cannot surrender our liberty; on the other hand we have to acknowledge a Christian principle higher than freedom itself—the principle laid down by S. Paul when he says, "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your free-

dom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another."* In short, if, as Christians, we seek a guiding principle in the matter of Sunday amusements and recreations, we shall surely find it in this —that those recreations only are expedient which do not conflict with the primary duty of worship, or lay undue burdens upon our brethren. We will not attempt to draw up a catalogue of "expedient" or "inexpedient" amusements, but broadly speaking we shall find it, as a rule, not difficult to discriminate between the two. The opening of museums and picture-galleries, for instance, on Sundays seems to be open to no valid objection, as the work involved is very slight, and need not, with a little arrangement, deprive the attendants either of their needful rest or opportunity of worship; but the opening of theatres would be a different and, as it seems to me, most deplorable innovation. So with physical exercise. There are healthy games which entail labour on no one, and, from a Christian point of view, are

* Gal. v. 13.

not only lawful, and, for many, may be expedient; and though personally I might hesitate, as a clergyman, to start a Sunday afternoon cricket club in my parish, yet I cannot disguise the fact that a healthy game would be preferable to much of the aimless loafing which now prevails; nor can I forget that such a saint as John Keble having first taught his people to worship on Sundays then taught them to play. But it is difficult to see how a good many amusements, including the numerous Sunday expeditions to the river, can be conducted without involving others in a good deal of labour; while there is plenty of evidence to show that the long Sunday bicycle rides—usually following the Saturday's exercise—if they do not entail labour upon *others*, often leave the riders themselves worn out, rather than refreshed, on Monday mornings. So, also, it is at least incumbent on the shareholders in our great railway companies, whose dividends are increased by the Sunday traffic, to take care that their servants are not deprived of their legitimate opportunities of rest and

worship. I speak with the more emphasis on this subject because it is clear that the average shareholder has not yet risen to the conception of his having any duties towards the servant whom he helps to employ, and permits, without protest, a considerable amount of oppression. The other day, for instance, a country clergyman wrote to me :—

"Seriously, things are getting wicked. A man I talked to the other day—an engine-driver, churchman, communicant, Bible-class man, lately moved from hereabouts to London, told me he had not had a Sunday off for fifteen weeks, driving golf and fishing trains, and that the company got ten days' work out of him every week. He looked fifteen years older than he need."

Such a state of things as this appears to me to be deeply discreditable, and even disgraceful, to the great company which permits it.

And as with public companies, so also with private individuals. There can be no doubt that the Sunday of to-day is marked by a vast amount of selfishness.* It will be

* See Note A.

sufficient to give one or two instances of the manner in which the selfish spirit exhibits itself. Let us take Sunday golf. If Sunday golf meant going over the links on the afternoon, after morning service, and the employment of, either very little labour, or none at all, no one, from a Christian standpoint, could object to such a proceeding. But in practice it is often otherwise. In the first place, it has been observed that the Sunday golfer is not so often the jaded and worried worker, eager for a little fresh air and exercise, as the individual whose week-day labours are of the lightest description, and are mostly limited to the effort to "kill time." People of this kind have no idea of depriving themselves of a morning's pleasure, and so public worship is omitted. Nor have they any intention of taking the trouble to carry their own clubs; and so the "caddy" is enticed from his church or Sunday-school to minister to their comforts. And thus the caddy not seldom takes his first step to that "far country" of which S. Augustine says, "The far country is

forgetfulness of God" ("Regio longinqua est oblivio Dei"). It is hardly necessary to add that the club-house must also be opened, for gentlemen of this description usually require a good deal of whisky and soda to get them through their labours. The other instance is the custom of making Sunday the day, above all others, for luncheon and dinner-parties. This custom is said to be growing more and more common in the richer and more fashionable circles of London society. The consequence is that servants are coming more and more to regard Sunday as a day of hard labour; a day on which they cannot expect to be able to leave the house; and it is no wonder that many of them are bitterly aggrieved. I am far from saying that in most instances the servants are unkindly treated in other respects. As a rule, no doubt, more liberty will be accorded to them in the week, as a compensation for what they have lost on Sundays. But this is not the same thing. Servants are spiritual beings; their duty is to worship God; and many of them desire

to do so. It may of course be said that they can worship God as well on one day as on another, and, in theory, the answer seems a strong one. In practice, however, it is otherwise. In many parts of the Continent, where church-going prevails at all, it prevails almost as much on week-days as on Sundays; the churches are open, services are frequent, and to the people in their working clothes it seems quite natural to attend them. But here, in England, it is different. Week-day services are indeed common, but the habit of attending them is by no means common, and for the overwhelming majority of English people (excepting one or two great fasts and festivals) worship is practised on Sunday, or not at all. And here, too, it must be observed that the Sunday luncheon or dinner-party is by no means exclusively, or even generally, confined to those who, like Members of Parliament, may be presumed, for part of the year, to be deprived, for social purposes, of their week-days. Here, also, the testimony is that it is the most idle and frivolous members of society who most

constantly deprive their servants of their opportunities for Sunday worship and recreation.

If it be asked, "What is the cause of these selfish Sundays, and what is their cure?" the answer does not seem very difficult. The ultimate cause is, no doubt, in the prevailing spirit of unbelief, or, at least, agnosticism. There is not much of violent or bitter hatred of Christianity, but there is a widespread unsettlement of religious belief. Men do not openly revile or jeer at the mysteries of the faith. On the contrary, many are doubters against their own wills, and lament, with deep and genuine regret, the loss of the faith which once they held; while others have merely caught, so to speak, the germs of agnosticism that are in the air, and are best described in the words of Clough ("There is no God"):—

> "Some others, also to themselves,
> Who scarce so much as doubt it,
> Think there is none, when they are well
> And do not think about it."

And as the root of our irreligious Sunday

is unbelief, in one form or another, so our only hope of a religious Sunday must lie in an increase of true religion. We say "a religious Sunday." Not a Puritan Sunday. That is gone for ever, and we have no desire to revive it. We have no dread of recreation. We want more re-creation, not less, and it is not impossible to dream of a time when on Sundays golfing and bicycling may fall into their true place, and boys may play in the fields, as well as sing in the churches "to the glory of God." Such questions as, "What time should we give to worship?" or "What work or pleasure should be encouraged on Sundays?" would very easily be solved by a generation which had learned to believe in the words of Jesus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

For, indeed, this and nothing less than this is the real question, Is the Christian

religion true? Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead on the first day of the week? Is it true that "God the Father made me and all the world, God the Son redeemed me and all mankind, God the Holy Ghost sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God?" Should we ever come as a nation with all our heart to answer these questions in the affirmative, the "Sunday question" would trouble us no more. Then, at last, led by the Spirit of Christ, we should fearlessly enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

But, meanwhile, it is for those who profess and call themselves Christians, led by the same Spirit and seeking for "a right judgment in all things," to determine for themselves what their Sundays will be. They must not resign their liberty; it may even become, in some instances, a religious duty to devote a portion of the day to healthy recreation—but, on the other hand, the warning of S. Paul will ever be in their ears, "Use not your freedom for an occasion of the flesh, but through love be servants one to another."

Love—here is the keynote of it all—love of God; love of the brethren. Let us pray above all for the "excellent gift of charity." So, whatever we may do, or leave undone, we shall surely be "in the spirit on the Lord's Day," and believing in the "life of the world to come" we may dare to hope that for us too the words of the old poet* may find their fulfilment:—

> "The Sundays of man's life,
> Threaded together on time's string,
> Make bracelets to adorn the wife
> Of the Eternal, glorious King."†

* GEORGE HERBERT, "Sunday."

† "The Sunday before his death, he rose suddenly from his bed, or couch, called for one of his instruments, took it into his hand, and said—

> 'My God, my God,
> My music shall find thee,
> And every thing
> Shall have his attribute to sing';

and having tuned it, he played and sang, 'The Sundays of Man's Life,' etc." (ISAAC WALTON.)

NOTE A.

The selfishness is by no means confined to one class of society. The following letters addressed to me by some well-known clergymen in different parts, rich and poor, of London, may be found interesting and suggestive:—

I.

From REV. J. W. HORSLEY, *Rector of S. Peter's, Walworth, S.W.*

Our Sunday shopping here is mainly confined to a sort of Sunday morning market in East Street, which is a great nuisance, perhaps more from the manner in which it is conducted than from the bare fact of its existence. It is mainly a barrow trade. In the Walworth Road, however, some shops are most unnecessarily open, notably some butchers, and as people here will crucify shop assistants by shopping up to midnight and even beyond, it cannot be necessary to buy meat on Sunday morning.

The sin in the matter is more on the part of the buyer than of the seller, the selfishness, laziness, and procrastination of the former (especially the women), and not chiefly the short-sighted greed of the seller. And the moral and economic harm begins in very early childhood with the universal

and insatiate purchase of sweets on Sunday from all the little shops in the back streets. If parents and Sunday-school teachers could impress upon children more that the Sunday seller is a pitiable fool, but the Sunday buyer an unpitiable knave, as selfishly depriving others of rest and worship, then the evil would disappear in a generation. But the dipsomania of the parent is continued in the saccharomania of the child, and where the former has neither foresight nor the power of prudential or altruistic procrastination, there the latter will not lay in the Sunday sweets on Saturday nor wait till Monday. And so immoral habits are formed which produce twelve manner of fruit and bear fruit in all seasons.

II.

From REV. PREBENDARY BEVAN, *Rector of Holy Trinity, Sloane Square; Gresham Professor of Divinity.*

You ask how people in this part of London attend church and observe Sunday. Of course there are two very distinct sets of people among the upper classes, viz. (i.) those who never go to church at all, and who keep Sunday on the river or the golf links, and (ii.) those who are very regular at church, when they are in town. Late dinners prevent many of them from coming to

church in the evening, and the practice of leaving town for week-ends takes many away who would otherwise be with us.

There are a considerable number, however, who are most regular in their religious duties, not only on Sundays but on week-days; and throughout Lent there is no difficulty in getting large week-day congregations.

There is a growing tendency, I fear, to turn Sunday into a day for visiting and dining out, and I should say that all traces of the old strict puritanical view have so utterly vanished, that the pendulum may be said to have swung very far indeed in an opposite direction.

I don't think that the true Christian principle of Sunday observance is generally understood or recognised among educated people.

They have a hazy idea, generally speaking, that the Jewish Sabbath has been abolished, in order that individual Christians may do exactly as they please on the Christian Sunday. They have no idea that the Sabbath and the Sunday were alike based upon (*a*) the need for rest from secular work, and (*b*) the duty of religious worship.

III.

From REV. PREBENDARY RIDGEWAY, *Vicar of Christ Church, Lancaster Gate, W.*

I am very glad you are publishing your Lectures on "Sunday." The question of its observance has been discussed for a long time, but since Archdeacon Hessey's Bampton Lectures I know nothing which deals with the question as a whole. It has been left to short addresses at Church Congresses and to tracts generally speaking as violent in language as they are superficial in thought and argument.

I feel very strongly that if, as it has been said, Sunday is the most divine of all divine institutions for the benefit of man, then the question of its observance can never be settled by hard-and-fast rules and enactments. What we want to get at are some great principles which we can apply to the needs of humanity, differing so widely as they do in their character and circumstances.

One of these elementary principles is, as it seems to me, the principle of proportion.

1. There must be some proportion for instances between man and man. If it be true that the Sunday is a day for all men, independent of their opportunities, privileges, etc., then it is impossible

that a hard-and-fast line will ever meet the needs of all, rich and poor, educated and illiterate.

2. There must be some proportion between the requirements of man in his body, mind, and spirit. If the day be a day of rest for the overworked body or brain, as well as a day for worship and the development of man's spiritual powers, then some proportion must be found whereby body, mind, and spirit may fairly share its benefits. A day all spent in bodily recreation, or in mental improvement, or in spiritual exercise, fails to profit the whole man, because no sense of proportion exists.

3. There must be some proportion between the demands of body and spirit as applied to the varied circumstances of life. A man who works hard all the week-days is surely justified in giving more of the Sunday to the exercise of his bodily powers and the employment of fresh air and scenes than the man who has plenty of time for play in the week and whose work, if he has any, is moderate and easy.

4. There must be a proportion in the recognition of the just demands of family, society, and Church life. Home, friends, religious observance, all have their right place, but what that right place is must be determined by each according to the circumstances of his life where God has placed him. There are many other directions in which this principle holds good, and yet it is only one

of many other principles which lies at the root of all thoughtful treatment of the Sunday question.

With regard to prevailing *practice*, there can be no doubt that our English Sunday is passing through a critical period of transition. The old order—and I speak from sixteen years' experience in the West End—is disappearing, while the old arguments have little or no weight. And I firmly believe that unless we can find some solid principles on which to take our stand, we shall before long have among us all the evils of a Continental Sunday, but without the recognition of the claims of religion which is still such a striking feature of Sunday morning abroad.

IV.

From REV. H. H. HENSON, *Rector of S. Margaret and Canon of Westminster.*

I have little claim to speak on the tendency with respect to Sunday observance among the people, for my observations have been limited in point of time to a period of about fourteen years, and in point of area to the eastern and outer-eastern districts of London. However, since you think it worth while to desire my opinion, I give it you for what it is worth; and having sufficiently discounted it in advance, I shall not scruple to write in very positive and unqualified terms.

Whether you take your impressions from within or from without the churches, they point to the conclusion that Sunday observance is rapidly declining among us. It is well known that attendance at Divine worship is both less general and more precarious. A far larger proportion of the people appears to be frankly contemptuous of formal religious observances, and those who still continue to frequent religious services do so from a continuously deteriorating motive. Services have become shorter, more varied, more sensuous; preaching has degenerated into mere emotionalism and rhodomontade; a large element of the sensational, and even the comic, has been introduced into the churches, which in many cases might be more truly described as places of public entertainment than of public worship. It cannot be supposed that the clergy and other religious persons could willingly subject religion to such humiliation; it must therefore be concluded that they are yielding to a pressure, which is almost necessity. Their churches and chapels would be perhaps totally deserted if they did not rely rather on æsthetic, histrionic, and humorous attractions than on the essentially simple, sober, and even severe worship proper to Christianity. I therefore infer that many of those who now attend religious services do so on motives that have little connexion with a consciousness of religious obligation.

Among the lower and lower-middle classes Sunday is the great day for making family visits; and, as families are now commonly dispersed over a considerable area, and the means of communication are beyond all precedent excellent, large numbers of the people travel on Sunday to visit relatives and friends. In some cases such visiting is not found inconsistent with attendance at public worship, but mostly it excludes all other interests. The passion for the open-air is greatly affecting Sunday observance during the summer months. Immense excursions to the seaside are organised by the Sunday League; and multitudes who rightly shrink from these are yet accustomed to arrange jaunts of their own. An immense concourse of people, on bicycles, in every kind of carriage from the four-horse brake to the coster's donkey-cart, by tram and train and steamboat, pours forth from London to Southend, Purfleet, even more distant seaside places, to the Forest of Epping, to the circle of hamlets and villages which are contiguous to the metropolitan area, to the well-known tourists' resorts. A lower type of Sunday reveller is familiar to politicians as the "*bonâ-fide* traveller." Every Sunday morning, for example, in Barking there was an invasion of hundreds of men from the adjacent districts of inner London, who regularly travelled and returned by trains which were colloquially described as "the boozers' trains." It is sufficiently

well known that the passion for fresh air is affecting the Sunday habits of those classes of society which cannot plead the excuses which are at least conceivable in the case of artisans, shop assistants, and clerks. The golf links in the neighbourhood of London are scenes of considerable activity on Sunday, and the parochial clergy are unanimous as to the widely mischievous consequences on the resident population of the suburban districts, especially on the lads who are employed as "caddies." I desire to say distinctly that the Sunday League excursions appear to me in their method, conduct, and result extremely undesirable. For considerable numbers of the artisans Sunday is normally a day of gluttony and slumber. The labour unions, friendly societies, and organisations of every sort use Sunday for elaborate "demonstrations," in which much popular oratory is listened to, and much liquor consumed. The traditional quiet of Sunday, of course, disappears almost entirely in a large artisan parish, and the continual movement and clamour make the traditional conduct of religious work increasingly difficult. The broad result to which everything leads is an aversion in the public mind to the normal observances of religion. To this end the well-intentioned, but not always well-devised, efforts of religious people also tend. Open-air preaching in the streets and parks is now general among all denominations. I doubt if the broad

result is advantageous to religion. In vigour, ability, and popularity it is matched by the harangues of the Secularists, Socialists, and other advocates of strange doctrines. The people are never out of audience of these voluble and often violent orators; and a disgust of church-going is directly ministered to by the very device which was designed to reclaim the multitude for the churches.

I see no evidence to show that the opening of picture-galleries, museums, etc., is likely to affect the mass of the people. It will be found, I think, that the petty numbers who take advantage of the facilities offered them are mostly drawn from that small section of the people which is accustomed on other days also to use the galleries. I do not draw the inference that the galleries should not be opened, but I point out that their opening or not opening is a trivial matter which will not really affect the main question. That, I take to be, the effect of the growing neglect of Sunday observance on the health and character of the people. I confess that I think that effect to be plainly and demonstrably bad. I think the moral fibre of all classes is weakened by their withdrawal from the elevating and solemnising influences of religious worship. It is a minor result, but not therefore unimportant, that the desertion of the churches in plainly telling for evil on the clergy. Since they have nobody to

teach, they cease to qualify themselves to be teachers: their intellectual level steadily deteriorates, and, as the necessity for strong, restraining influence on their part grows more evident, they themselves become increasingly unable to resist any popular tendency. I am sure that, in the long run, definite religious convictions and regular religious habits are the safeguards of morality, and I think I can see already evidences of moral decline, synchronising, as I should expect them to synchronise, with the general abandonment of the traditional religious safeguards. Sunday observance takes thus, in my mind, a position of the utmost social importance; and I think it deserves the study of social reformers not less than that of the advocates of time-honoured religious obligations.

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